United Nations S/PV.5865

Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 5865th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 April 2008, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> On 14 April 2008, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5865th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.
>
> The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.
>
> Members of the Council, Mr. Mulet and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views.

United Nations S/PV.5866

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5866th meeting

Tuesday, 15 April 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2008/219)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2008/219)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Germany, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Hanz (Germany) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/248, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Croatia, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2008/219, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it (S/2008/248). Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1808 (2008).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5867

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5867th meeting

Tuesday, 15 April 2008, 3.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/135)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2008/135)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Lebanon, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council recalls its resolution 1773 (2007), as well as the statements of its President on Lebanon, and welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General of 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641) and of 28 February 2008 (S/2008/135).
>
> "It reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) and reaffirms its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard.
>
> "The Security Council takes note of the progress, as well as of the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General, regarding the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and emphasizes the need for greater progress on all the key issues required for a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution, as referred to in the Secretary-General's reports.
>
> "It also calls upon all concerned parties, in particular in the region, to intensify their efforts in implementing resolution 1701 (2006), including by fully cooperating with the Secretary-General in this regard.
>
> "The Security Council reiterates its full support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and calls on all parties to abide by their obligations to respect the safety of United Nations personnel. It welcomes the further enhancement of the cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces.
>
> "It stresses the importance of and the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions, including its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/8.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5868

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5868th meeting

Wednesday, 16 April 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mbeki	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Chevalier
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Bassole
	China	Mr. Wang Yi
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Ms. Yade
	Indonesia	Mr. Wirajuda
	Italy	Mr. Prodi
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Brown
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham Binh Minh

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 8 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/229)

Report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 8 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/229)

Report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18)

The President: The Security Council has agreed in prior consultations to extend invitations, under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure, to the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, and, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. Members of the Council have before them the following documents: a letter dated 8 April 2008 from South Africa transmitting a concept paper for this meeting (S/2008/229); a report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186), and the report of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18).

I shall now make some opening remarks and a statement in my national capacity.

When we assumed the presidency of the Security Council last year, we initiated discussions on the need to examine the best possible ways of strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We especially focused on the African Union, given that most of the United Nations peacekeeping operations are in Africa.

We have therefore convened this debate of the Security Council to discuss this matter once more and to give a further opportunity, especially to African countries, to share their experiences in regard to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Your high-level attendance of this meeting confirms our shared view of the timeliness of this engagement. We do hope that at the end of this debate we will be able to adopt concrete measures to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular, the African Union.

The African Union has shown its commitment to resolving African conflicts. The operationalization of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the continental early warning systems, post-conflict reconstruction and development, the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force are clear indications of this commitment and the basic architecture for addressing peace and security issues on the continent.

However, the availability of the necessary and predictable resources remains the most important constraint that limits Africa's capacity to give effect to these commitments and help resolve its own conflicts.

The issue of the funding of regional peacekeeping operations is central to defining and streamlining the relationship between the United Nations and African Union. We therefore welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an African Union/United Nations panel of distinguished persons to consider in depth the modalities of financing and supporting in other ways the peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organizations.

After all, when the African Union addresses peace and security matters, it does so on behalf of the wider international community. Therefore, today's debate should give a clear indication as to the kind of mechanisms and processes that should be put in place to achieve this objective.

Similar attention has to be paid to establishing an effective partnership between the United Nations, especially the Security Council, and the African Union Peace and Security Council. In fact, the presence in this Chamber of the ambassadors of the African Union Peace and Security Council, who will have a joint meeting with their United Nations counterparts, is a significant step towards strengthening the relationship between the African Union and the United Nations.

At the same time, we need a comprehensive review of the experience of both the United Nations and the host countries with respect to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Clearly, this is necessary if we are to improve the effectiveness of these missions. The surge in peacekeeping operations over the years and the increasing role of regional organizations in both conflict resolution and managing post-conflict situations has necessitated such a dialogue.

The challenges of Africa are multidimensional and cannot be addressed in isolation, one from the other. Matters of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping are inextricably linked to the achievement of sustainable social and economic development.

Over the past decade, there has been discernible progress with respect to peace, security, democracy and development in Africa. To consolidate these achievements, it is critical that we make an additional effort, effectively and urgently, to address the conflict or post-conflict situations already on the shared agenda of the United Nations and the African Union.

Our peacemaking efforts on the African continent have shown us that the resolution of conflicts requires an approach that places the views and efforts of the affected country and its people at the centre of the search for a peaceful solution, thus obliging the international community to intervene as a partner in support of the national effort.

I sincerely hope that our deliberations will assist us to achieve the objectives of this debate.

I shall now resume my duties as President of the Council. I now give the floor to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who will introduce the two reports before the Council.

Mr. Pascoe: As you know, the Secretary-General will be here to make a broader statement in a few minutes. At this point, I would only like to very briefly introduce two important, recent reports of the Secretary-General that go to the heart of the issues being discussed today at this high-level meeting on peace and security in Africa.

First, there is the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18), which reviews the recent efforts to develop more multifaceted approaches to dealing with conflicts, particularly in Africa. It emphasizes the need for a broad strategy that helps to build national and regional capacities for preventive action. Although conflict prevention is not always highly visible, it remains the most cost-effective and efficient way to promote international peace and security.

In order to enhance United Nations capacity for early warning, conflict prevention and mediation in Africa — and elsewhere — the Secretary-General has proposed the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs to work in this area. Successfully preventing conflict in the field will require additional resources that can be provided only by Member States.

The Secretary-General's report makes a number of suggestions on how the Security Council can implement resolution 1625 (2005) and therefore improve and sustain the ability of the United Nations to avert negative developments and prevent crises from escalating into armed conflict. The Council is called upon, for example, to dispatch missions to the field on a timely basis to assess situations on the ground and to increase its use of the Arria Formula, or similar arrangements, for broad informal discussions. It is urged to use reports of groups of experts to carry out lessons-learned exercises to motivate parties to resolve conflicts. The Council is also called upon to develop a stronger and more structured relationship with the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The report calls for continued efforts to combat cross-border and transnational threats to stability, including efforts to control the arms trade. It urges continued efforts against gender-based violence. The report also calls for full cooperation in developing the capacities of African regional organizations to deploy both civil and military assets quickly when needed, including for developing an African standby force.

The Secretary-General has instructed the United Nations system to strengthen current levels of collaboration, to maintain efforts to deploy expertise on prevention and to ensure that it continues to work closely with and support the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the Panel of the Wise. This will help build the long-term capacity of the African Union. It is thus in support of the Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union.

Secondly, there is the report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186). The report describes the many facets of United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in peace and security activities under Chapter VIII. It identifies the challenges facing these partnerships, particularly in Africa, and focuses on the opportunities that could be seized to ensure more functional and effective cooperation and coordination. This would be based on a clear division of labour that would recognize the comparative advantage that each organization may have in dealing with a particular conflict.

The Secretary-General proposes better support arrangements for further cooperation with regional organizations. He recommends specific actions in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, disarmament, non-proliferation, peacebuilding, human rights and humanitarian action. He suggests setting up a panel of distinguished persons from the United Nations and the African Union within the next three months to make concrete recommendations on how to help finance peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organizations.

I hope that this open debate will help forge a consensus on these vital questions, while reaffirming the centrality of early warning, conflict prevention and mediation among the main responsibilities of Member States and the Security Council.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and current Chairperson of the African Union, to take the floor.

President Kikwete: At the beginning, Mr. President, you promised that we would have seven minutes to speak; now you have reduced the time limit to five.

Let me thank you, Mr. President, for considering the idea of holding this meeting to discuss the relations between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations. As rightly stated, African peace and security issues are on the current agenda of the United Nations Security Council. As members are aware, we in the African Union have developed a comprehensive, action-oriented peace architecture for addressing conflicts on our continent. Conflict prevention and mediation, post-conflict peacebuilding, counter-terrorism, humanitarian emergency response and the non-proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons, particularly small arms and illicit weapons, are the major issues that preoccupy us in that regard.

In the African Union, our constitutive partnership with the United Nations has been underlined as essential for the effective implementation of our Union's peace and security agenda. It is for that reason that we in the African Union consider this meeting to be critical for the strengthening of our partnership.

Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations defines the basis for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. While the ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the Security Council, regional organizations and peace initiatives serve as important building blocks for global collective security.

Today's meeting is a welcome endeavour in our joint quest to advance cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. Our experience in various conflict situations, during which we have worked together in Africa, has demonstrated that we have been able to achieve notable successes. But much more needs to be done, and there are challenges that need to be overcome through joint efforts. This meeting, therefore, is a perfect setting for identifying and discussing those challenges and agreeing on a way forward to overcome them.

Let me remind this important organ of the United Nations that Africa has come of age. We have become aware of our responsibility to take action with regard to conflicts on our continent and elsewhere on this planet. Indeed, through the African Union and the regional economic communities, African nations have increasingly been seen to be proactive in taking decisions and actions to deal with conflicts that befall African nations and peoples.

The AU and the regional economic communities need partnership with the United Nations for many reasons. First, they need to build their capacities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. There is a serious demand for assistance in building the requisite institutional capacities. Substantial human and financial resources are required to enable us to carry out these critical functions, and such resources are not readily available. The United Nations can be of great help in assisting us; with such help, we can overcome these constraints. The Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union is an appropriate mechanism. The AU will continue to work with the regional consultative mechanism of the United Nations in Addis Ababa in implementing the Programme. But Africa's demand for resources is enormous. We appeal to the international community to do more.

There is also the question of speed in taking action when threats to peace arise, particularly on the African continent. Experience has shown that the United Nations is not as fast as one would like in taking decisions and action. We wish that the processes within this institution could be expedited. I am sure that I am not the first one to have said that; neither is this the first time that such an appeal has been made to the Security Council.

There are two other things that require the attention of those participating in this meeting. The first relates to mandates for regional organizations, especially where military intervention and sanctions are involved. The United Nations holds the overall mandate for those two types of action. We in the AU and the regional economic communities have intervened from time to time, and our intervention has proved effective. My concern is about the danger of conflict arising between the AU and the United Nations, especially if the latter were to take a different position where such decisions have been made and actions taken. I believe that this matter needs to be given serious thought and that ways to prevent such a thing from happening must be considered.

The second thing requiring our attention is an appeal that the United Nations establish mechanisms for helping the African Union and the regional economic communities to build the capacities to implement their decisions regarding conflict resolution as expeditiously as possible. As members know, conflict prevention and resolution require swift reactions. Indeed, the AU and the regional economic communities have demonstrated the capacity to be fast in many instances. Unfortunately, as I said earlier, we are constrained in terms of resources.

In some ways, this matter is very much related to the current funding regulations of the United Nations, which do not allow the funding of peacekeeping missions and operations led by other groups, even when authorized by the Security Council. That impedes peacekeeping and peace support missions undertaken by the African Union and the regional economic communities in Africa. That in turn affects the predictability and sustainability of such missions and may jeopardize entire peace initiatives undertaken by the AU and the regional economic communities in Africa.

In that regard, we welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General that an African Union-United Nations panel be set up within the next three months to consider the modalities of how to support regional organizations in terms of financing such operations. We hope that the panel will look at the possibility of amending regulations to enable the United Nations to finance regional operations authorized by the United Nations Security Council. But we also hope that modalities will be explored for assisting acceptable initiatives of regional organizations that do not have the authorization of the Security Council. After all, the goal is the same: the maintenance of international peace.

Experience has shown that such interventions have been very useful, at least in the case of Africa. Where regional, economic communities and our continental organization, formerly the Organization of African Unity and now the AU, have taken action — in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, southern Sudan, Somalia, Darfur, Zimbabwe and the Comoros — it has helped so much in mitigating the crises before the United Nations arrived on the scene. Indeed, I believe that if in the future such mechanisms are strengthened and working relations with the United Nations are better defined and streamlined, there would be fewer instances where direct intervention of the United Nations as an institution would be involved.

Take as an example Zimbabwe, the subject of so much discussion these days. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), as an organization, has done a tremendous job. It is SADC's work that has enabled the people of Zimbabwe to hold the recent round of peaceful elections. SADC remains seized with the situation in Zimbabwe to ensure that the will of the people of Zimbabwe is respected. This is the spirit of the meeting last week, and it will be the spirit of future meetings to be held soon. SADC needs to be supported in this regard.

Before I conclude, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in mobilizing additional resources and logistical support for the international community in support of African peacekeeping missions in places like Darfur and Somalia. I also thank the countries and organizations, such as the European Union, that have responded positively. But much more needs to be done, urgently.

The peacekeeping operations in Darfur and Somalia, both of which are authorized by the Security Council, are still seriously constrained owing to a lack of adequate financial resources, logistics and equipment. Within the broader issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the AU, I reaffirm and urge continuing implementation of the declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation, agreed upon by our two organizations in 2006.

In conclusion, let me once again thank you, Mr. President, for giving the AU an opportunity to share its thoughts during this important debate. We need and encourage cooperation between our two organizations, and our two Councils need each other. We in the African Union support the idea that these meetings should be held annually with as much technical consultation as may be required to be conducted in between. We look forward with great anticipation to the outcomes of this debate today and tomorrow. As usual, we expect the resolutions and decisions to advance and consolidate the working relations between the United Nations and the AU, and between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The President: I welcome the Secretary-General and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: It is a great honour for me to participate in this very important high-level meeting of the Security Council.

First of all, I apologize for being late because of my unavoidable meeting with the Head of State of the Republic of Korea, my home country. I hope the Council will understand the situation.

It is an honour to join this Council and to welcome members to the United Nations. Allow me to pay tribute to South Africa for convening this debate on peace and security in Africa, and for giving us the opportunity to discuss the important relationship between the United Nations and the African Union (AU).

President Mbeki, I am especially happy to welcome you to the United Nations. Let me commend your personal engagement in strengthening our partnership.

Let me also congratulate President Kikwete of Tanzania on assuming the chairmanship of the African Union. I look forward to working with you, Sir, in the months ahead.

In the 15 months that I have served as Secretary-General, I have devoted more time to African issues than to those on any other continent — from peace and security to the Millennium Development Goals. I have visited 11 African countries thus far, and I will leave on Friday this week to visit four more.

Preventing and resolving conflict peacefully must remain high on the shared agenda of the AU and the United Nations. In this context, I welcome the announcement of a new Government in Kenya. Now that the immediate power-sharing issues have been addressed, I urge all sides to stay committed to resolving the longer-term causes of the recent unrest.

I am deeply concerned at the uncertainty created by the prolonged non-release of the election results in Zimbabwe. Absent a transparent solution to this impasse, the situation could deteriorate further, with serious implications for the people of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean authorities and the countries of the region have insisted that these matters are for the region to resolve, and the international community continues to watch and wait for decisive action. The credibility of the democratic process in Africa could be at stake here. If there is a second round of elections, they must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, with international observers. I urge the leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to continue their efforts. The United Nations stands ready to provide assistance in this regard.

Meanwhile, we must step up the work for desperately needed progress in bringing peace and stability to Darfur and Somalia. The partnership between the AU and the United Nations will remain crucial to these efforts.

The Council has heard Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe introduce my two reports. As these show, the relationship between the United Nations and the AU is strong and broad.

The declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation, signed in 2006 between Chairperson Konaré and my predecessor, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, provides a vehicle for the United Nations to assist in building the capacity of the African Union. We have already made significant progress in giving life to the vision behind the declaration.

As provided for in the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme, we are taking concrete steps to help develop the African Peace and Security Architecture. This work covers a broad range of activities, from good offices and mediation on border issues, to early warning, conflict prevention and building operational capacity.

We have established a dedicated team to help operationalize the concept of an African standby force, which would build on the valiant and pioneering efforts of the African Union's missions in Burundi, Somalia and the Sudan. Today, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations team develops training, operational capacity and technical advice, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the subregional organizations and donors.

Our two Organizations are now far better equipped for the critical task of mediation, thanks to the establishment of the secretariat of the AU Panel of the Wise, and the launch of the United Nations mediation standby team of experts. Our cooperation during the crisis in Kenya is an example of how we can achieve more by working together.

Overall, we should be proud of the progress we have made. But, above all, we should be energized to do even more as we move ahead.

I am heartened at the deepening cooperation between this Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. I warmly welcome tomorrow's joint meeting of the two Councils — the second of its kind, and the first to be held at United Nations Headquarters.

This debate also gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré. Chairman Konaré, under your leadership, the AU has transformed its relationship with the rest of the world. I look forward to working closely with your successor, Mr. Jean Ping.

As we consolidate the partnership between our institutions, I will spare no effort in making it complementary, effective and inclusive. In the two reports (S/2008/18, S/2008/186) that the Council will examine today, I have made a number of specific proposals for its consideration. I am resolved to enhance cooperation with all regional organizations, so as to create in the future effective mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as a predictable, interlinked and reliable system for global peacekeeping under the Charter. I am confident that the Council's meeting today will contribute to that goal.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement. I am quite certain that all of us understand why he had to delay his joining us here this morning in the Council. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary-General.

I now invite The Right Honourable Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to take the floor.

Mr. Brown (United Kingdom): I want to start by thanking President Mbeki for convening this event and for his important and pivotal role in the creation of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, both of which are essential to ensuring African solutions to the challenges that Africa faces.

Six decades ago, the United Nations declared its ambition to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and recognized that peace and prosperity are indivisible. Today's discussion is an opportunity to forge a new consensus on the support that is now needed to prevent conflict, to resolve conflict and to rebuild from conflict afterwards. Work by the African Union, which I applaud, has laid the foundations for a political solution in Kenya in recent weeks, and it has helped create the conditions for recovery in Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other areas of the continent. But we recognize that the African Union needs more support, which, as President Mbeki has said, must be part of a wider endeavour.

Today there is still a gaping hole in our ability to address the illegitimate threats and use of force against innocent people. It is to our shame that the international community did not act in Rwanda. Darfur shows the urgent needs that yet have to be met. Today there are 28,000 African peacekeepers. But if we are to honour our responsibility to protect behind borders where there are atrocities, we need to ensure more systematic support for peacekeepers, and we need to build the capacity of vulnerable nations to prevent conflict. Therefore, in addition to training 12,000 African peacekeepers, Britain will step up its contribution to the joint European Union-African Union training exercises in support of the African Union's Peace and Security Directorate. But I believe we also need agreement on more predictable and sustainable sources of funding, as has already been mentioned around this table.

I welcome the Secretary-General's proposals for a senior panel, which should, among other things, examine the creation of an international trust fund with United Nations oversight.

History tells us that fragile and conflict States need not only humanitarian aid and peacekeeping, they need to combine that with help for stabilization and reconstruction. For countries where breakdown has occurred, it is now right to agree major changes in the way the international order responds, so that we can systematically combine humanitarian aid and peacekeeping with help for reconstruction and development.

Therefore, during our presidency of the Security Council next month in May, Britain will propose that when Security Council resolutions authorize peacekeeping missions, the whole United Nations system also is able to authorize action on stabilization and reconstruction. A single envoy is given authority for coordinating international efforts on peacekeeping and recovery in post-conflict zones, and a United Nations fund is created to provide immediate support for reconstruction, to which Britain will contribute. In the same way that we have military forces ready to respond to conflicts, we should agree to have civilian experts ready on standby to deploy quickly to help rebuild countries emerging from instability. For that purpose, Britain will lead the way by making available a thousand-strong United Kingdom standby civilian force including police, emergency services, professionals, judges and trainers.

I have alluded to the work done in Kenya, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other parts of Africa. Three weeks ago, the people of Zimbabwe sent a strong message of their commitment to democracy. In line with President Kikwete's comments today, Britain supports those in the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) who are working to ensure that the will of the Zimbabwean people is upheld. We will do everything to encourage those efforts. I am pleased that SADC is to meet again this weekend.

We should also respond to the Secretary-General's suggestion that the United Nations can do a great deal to help in support of the African Union and SADC. I welcome the Secretary-General's statement today. Having seen the results at polling stations, no one thinks that President Mugabe has won this election. A stolen election would not be a democratic election at all. As the Secretary-General has said, the credibility of the democratic process depends on there being a legitimate Government. Therefore, let a single clear message go out from here in New York that we are and will be vigilant for democratic rights, that we stand solidly behind democracy and human rights for Zimbabwe and that we stand ready to support Zimbabweans in building a better future.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of Italy, to take the floor.

Mr. Prodi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish to begin by thanking President Mbeki for this initiative.

Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union (AU), is a critical issue that I care about deeply. This initiative therefore has our full support.

We have already travelled a long way down the road of cooperation between international and regional organizations. There are positive examples throughout the world. In Europe, the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and NATO have played, and continue to play, a vital role in stabilizing the Balkans. In the Mediterranean, we have a successful joint United Nations-EU mission in Lebanon. In Africa there are numerous partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union, such as in Darfur. In Asia, the comprehensive approach to Afghanistan is grounded in the need for complementarity between the United Nations and other regional organizations.

We have all come to agree on one basic principle, namely, that the closer the cooperation between the international and the regional levels, the more effective the actions of the international community in crisis situations.

I would now like to consider the African Union, which is the most interesting political reality of the African continent. As I said last year in my addresses to the Addis Ababa Summit in January and to the Security Council meeting on Africa in September, we have to keep working and to step up our efforts. As I see it, the African Union can make ever-greater progress if its follows the best practices of comparable political and institutional realities. I should like now to refer to a few working points.

I believe that the African Union, with the assistance of all of us, should continue down the path on which it has embarked to create permanent structures that will enable it to manage crises in political, military and civil terms. I repeat, in political, military and civil terms.

Of course, there is a problem of resources not unlike the one we face in Europe, where we have increased the European Union budget for civilian missions, strengthened our missions' command capacity and set up a mobilization and rapid reaction system for crisis situations. More is still needed, but 10 years ago that would all have been unthinkable. That represents important progress which deserves to be studied carefully by Africa.

Simply averring the will to handle one's own continental crises is not enough. The African Union has to follow through on that will resolutely. That is the only way for asserted ownership to become actual ownership. A continent that rightly aspires to play a global role should aspire to equip itself with the instruments needed to set its house in order. I am greatly encouraged by what I see — an Africa that is not just seeking assistance, but is, rather, playing a front-line role in international efforts to bring peace to the continent.

We see this also in the great efforts, which we fully support, of all the African subregional organizations. Together with the African Union, they have helped to identify a political solution in Kenya and are working to find a rapid solution to the profound crisis in Zimbabwe, which we are following with great concern and which I hope will be resolved as soon as possible, because that country needs a working democracy.

In building a more solid African institutional framework, the structures for coordinating all the regional organizations must also be strengthened. The European Union and the African Union launched a joint strategy in Lisbon last December. It was a historic outcome in which I believe, and I worked on it both in Brussels and in Rome. Now we must make it operational and concrete because it is a new and essential instrument.

I fully endorse the statement that the Slovenian presidency will deliver shortly on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to offer a few closing remarks about what Italy can do to continue lending a hand.

When I was the President of the European Commission, it was my responsibility to launch the European Peace Facility for Africa. As Italy's Prime Minister, I decided last year to introduce an Italian instrument to support the African Union and its peacekeeping efforts, particularly in the Horn of Africa. I signed the agreement with the President of the Commission, Mr. Konaré, which promotes African ownership in full complementarity with its European counterpart facility. The Facility has already enabled the achievement of significant results, such as in Somalia, where we are using it to train the Somali security forces and to rebuild the public administration.

The United Nations centres in Italy — such as the Staff College in Turin and the Logistics Base in Brindisi — will remain available to Africa as tools for education, training and capacity-building, in the spirit of the suggestions made by the Secretary-General in his report.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our readiness to strengthen cooperation — in ways to be jointly identified — between the United Nations and the African Union, including in the area of financing. I am fully aware that this is a key point to which African leaders attach great importance, as we have heard in earlier statements. The Secretary-General's report makes a number of proposals that we endorse. We will not fail to offer our ideas and resources in the pursuit of that process.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, President of Côte d'Ivoire.

President Gbagbo (*spoke in French*): Like previous speakers, I should like to thank President Thabo Mbeki for this initiative, as well as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who, immediately upon assuming his official functions, began to take the steps necessary to assist Côte d'Ivoire to emerge from its crisis.

I also commend President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, who helped us in his capacity as head of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I wish to point out here that on Monday, before I boarded the plane, Côte d'Ivoire, having assembled all the actors to participate in the elections, set the date of 30 November for the first round of presidential balloting. It represents a victory for us all, and especially for Côte d'Ivoire, which has grown weary of this erratic crisis. The first round of presidential elections will be held on 30 November, and everyone should support us morally and assist us to convene the elections and to put an era that does us no honour behind us.

Today's meeting is an important one. I wish to make just a few points. The United Nations was established at the end of the Second World War. It is the same age as me and older than many current heads of State. It was created to resolve conflicts among States, but our conflicts in Africa generally take place within a State and are aimed at destroying it. That has been the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and wherever conflict has erupted. Darfur is a somewhat unique case because it contains both an internal Sudanese conflict and a border conflict between the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. It is perhaps the only case in which two or three States have faced off against one another in Africa. The others, even that in Kenya, are domestic conflicts, which were not exactly foreseen or contemplated as a reason for the establishment of the United Nations.

I greatly admire the initiatives that Africans themselves have launched. We have done a great deal in ending our own conflicts. I commend all those who have led the African Union and the Organization of African Unity before it, as well as our colleague and brother President Konaré, who is present among us, and his successor, who is striving methodically.

We need, however, to institutionalize all our progress, and the United Nations must support us. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, we have a Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Abidjan, but his work needs to reach out to our institutions and the United Nations must work to decentralize power. This is a question not merely of resources, but of responsibility as well. It is a structural issue. The African Union and subregional organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community, ECOWAS and the Arab organizations, must be provided with the structural responsibility to resolve the new types of conflict we are seeing today.

That is what I wanted to suggest. Of course it is necessary to support the African Union and its membership. My expectation from the United Nations is that such reforms will take place. Reform of the United Nations does not mean only reform in terms of who is on the Security Council and who is not: it is a question of who does what in the world. The world has become too big: I believe that the world population was not even 2 billion when the United Nations was founded, and there were far fewer independent States. With every passing month and year, new countries have emerged. We must ensure that regional organizations play a larger role, and that they enjoy the support of the United Nations.

That is my proposal, and that is why I came here today. Whenever Côte d'Ivoire has made significant progress, Africans have been on the front line. In 2005 we made significant progress through South Africa's mediation; and we are making significant progress today through Burkina Faso's facilitation. We have established an inter-Ivorian dialogue with Burkina Faso facilitation. I believe that Africans have a great deal to offer Africa in terms of peace. They have a great deal to offer, and I want them to give a great deal — and to give more. I want the United Nations to support them so that they can give even more to peace in Africa.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, Special Envoy of the President of China, to take the floor.

Mr. Wang Yi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to congratulate South Africa on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

The Charter of the United Nations assigns primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to the Security Council. In Chapter VIII of the Charter, the founding Members of the United Nations, with great vision, also encouraged the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements. World peace and development are now faced with many difficulties and challenges, and it is imperative to respond to them forcefully and collectively at the national, regional and international levels. In a rapidly changing world, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations will both promote multilateralism and boost the international collective security mechanism.

Without stability and development in Africa, global peace and prosperity are out of the question. The African Union is Africa's largest and most representative regional organization, and it has gained widespread international recognition for the increasingly important role it plays in maintaining peace and stability and resolving conflicts in Africa. The good cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union over the past few years has become a model for observing the United Nations Charter. China salutes the determination, courage and dedication of African countries and of the African Union.

The twenty-first century should witness the end of disturbances and poverty in Africa. It should be a century in which Africa fully controls its own destiny and attains peace, stability and development. Achieving that goal requires a common effort by the international community and Africa and a closer partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

China supports the forging of a stable partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. The Security Council bears a responsibility it cannot shirk regarding the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, while the African Union has a deep grasp of African issues. The two should strengthen their coordination and form synergies on the basis of equality, mutual respect, complementarity and mutual benefit, drawing on each other's strengths. In our view, the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union should be based on a predictable, sustainable and flexible framework. While maintaining its authority, the Security Council should give priority to supporting the key role of the African Union in resolving regional conflicts and should give full consideration to the views of the African Union.

We hope that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur will complete its deployment at an early date and will begin operations. We also support the United Nations taking over the African Union peacekeeping operation in Somalia.

China holds the view that the United Nations should engage in multifaceted cooperation with the African Union in wide-ranging areas. Such cooperation should encompass the three pillars of security, development and human rights. It should be pursued throughout the process of confidence-building, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development. Promoting a culture of reconciliation and attaining the Millennium Development Goals will not only help eradicate the root causes of conflict, but also provide a solid basis for ensuring peace in Africa. We support the United Nations and its Security Council, Peacebuilding Commission, Secretariat and other organs in building and strengthening coordination and consultation mechanisms with the African Union at various levels.

China calls for high priority to be given to capacity-building in pursuing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. The African Union's efforts to make peace are constrained by a lack of human resources, material supplies and funding. The United Nations and the international community should respond positively to the African Union's legitimate requests and should work creatively to deliver on their promises and translate their pledges into action. We hope that the United Nations will strengthen its cooperation with the African Union in personnel training, institution-building, the sharing of information and experience, resource management and logistical assistance; these are fields in which the United Nations has rich experience.

The Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union (A/61/630, annex) should be fully implemented, and the United Nations should play a key role in pooling other international assistance.

Finally, I wish to thank South Africa for preparing a draft Security Council resolution on the issue we are discussing today. China fully supports the draft resolution.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, to take the floor.

Mr. Wirajuda (Indonesia): Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation to you, President Thabo Mbeki, for your initiative to convene this thematic debate on an issue of tremendous importance to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Before I proceed, I wish to reiterate Indonesia's long-standing and irrevocable commitment to Africa. The then-newly-independent Indonesia, though still in its infancy, had little hesitation in promoting the cause of Africa's independence struggle through the seminal Africa-Asia Conference held at Bandung in 1955. Since then we have contributed actively to United Nations peacekeeping operations on the continent: in the Congo in the 1960s, and then in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as in conflict prevention, is long-standing and is recognized in the Charter. It is a subject that has been gaining momentum and relevance, and rightly so: our increasingly complex and interconnected world, marked by a proliferation of actors and variables, requires us to look at issues in an ever more holistic and integrated manner. We simply do not have the luxury of remaining insulated or indifferent, as the destinies of all are intertwined and as conflicts in one region of the globe will sooner or later affect other regions.

Indonesia is an avid supporter of regional cooperation. We are convinced of the transformational potential of regional cooperation in preventing and settling conflict and bringing regional peace and stability in its place. Such conditions are prerequisites for economic development. Our own region's experience attests to that fact. Ensuring peace and security in South-East Asia for more than four decades, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has contributed immensely in shouldering burdens that would otherwise have fallen on the United Nations.

Indonesia is also a strong advocate for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Of course, such cooperation is invaluable in strengthening and empowering regional organizations. It is not, however, a one-way process. Indonesia believes that the United Nations also benefits from such cooperation. After all, it would seem only natural that in dealing with particular conflict situations the United Nations should benefit from regional knowledge, perspectives and experiences. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Synergy and partnership should be promoted.

Most recently the United Nations and the African Union (AU), as well as subregional organizations in Africa, have shown us that such cooperation can deliver tangible results. Challenges certainly remain. More support is obviously needed to enable the AU to respond to and deal more effectively with conflicts on the continent on behalf of the international community. The United Nations and the African Union must therefore enhance their capacity for confidence-building, friendly diplomacy and peacemaking and realize their full potential. The need for such an undertaking is self evident, for it is the undeniable reality of our time that conflict situations in Africa constitute significant portions of the Security Council's agenda. The reward for such an undertaking is therefore greater still.

Collaboration between the AU and the United Nations has the potential to transform conflict situations, bringing peace, stability and prosperity to the continent. We commend the AU for taking the lead in Somalia through the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), thus contributing to peace and security in that country. We call for more support for AMISOM by the international community. We also commend the AU for contributing to peace efforts in the Darfur region of the Sudan, where, with the consent of the parties, it deployed the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). The transformation of AMIS into a hybrid operation provides us with important lessons that help us to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the AU and are also valuable for other regional organizations. We have also drawn on the experience of the AU and the United Nations in conflict prevention and peacemaking to supplement our own experience in those fields.

Consistent with the statement of the President of the Security Council last November (*S/PRST/2007/42*), under Indonesia's presidency, we recognize that regional organizations need to strengthen and increase cooperation among themselves. In that regard the United Nations can provide its political support and technical expertise. Indeed, with you presiding over the Council today, Mr. President, I am particularly pleased to highlight the close cooperation that Indonesia and South Africa have forged in promoting interregional cooperation. I am referring to our joint efforts in promoting Asia-Africa strategic partnerships launched at Bandung in 2005 during the 50-year commemoration of the historic 1955 Asia-Africa Bandung Conference.

I would like to highlight in particular the Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference (AASROC) meetings in Durban and Bandung, which preceded the second Asia-Africa Summit in 2005. AASROC is significant in its approach of promoting cooperation among regional and subregional organizations in Asia and Africa. Cooperation between regional organizations or arrangements is an essential feature of contemporary international architecture.

Indonesia has benefited from interregional collaboration. The European Union and ASEAN have contributed significantly to our successful efforts to restore peace and security in the province of Aceh during the period from 2005 to 2007, especially by participating in a joint monitoring mission to supervise the implementation of the Aceh peace agreement.

With regard to the current hub-and-spokes relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations, we are in favour of its expansion into a one consisting of a hub and a network of spokes, a network of regional organizations working together to maintain peace and security, connected to each other and with the United Nations at the centre.

With regard to my own region of South-East Asia and its regional organizations, since the Security Council thematic debate last November (*5776th meeting*), the ten members of ASEAN have moved forward by signing the ASEAN Charter. The Charter represents not only our shared values and shared visions but also our commitment to progress in unison and to contribute to international peace and security. That is our contribution as the ASEAN community.

Our region can learn from the experiences and best practices of other regions, including Africa. However, to us the notion of receiving is tantamount to the notion of giving — to provide, to confer. In a world of plenty, giving is a feature to be embraced by all. Indonesia believes that ASEAN can also offer its experiences and best practices to other regions. To strengthen our outward-looking strategy we have cultivated dialogue-partner relationships with some ten countries and organizations. ASEAN's reach extends far beyond its immediate subregion. Above all, we are strengthening our links with the United Nations. We signed a memorandum of understanding on United Nations-ASEAN cooperation last September.

Our participation reflects not only our wish to share our views and experiences on the issues but also our desire to learn the views, lessons and best practices of other countries and other regions, which we can take home to our region. We also hope our experience can be useful to other regions in the interest of a more peaceful world for all.

The President: I now invite the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila, to take the floor.

President Kabila (*spoke in French*): May I begin, Mr. President, by stating my warm congratulations to you and my wishes for a fruitful mandate for the Republic of South Africa's presidency of the Security Council during the month of April. May I also say how much my country appreciates your initiative in organizing this special Council meeting devoted to relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), on the subject of peacekeeping and international security.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all his team, those at Headquarters and those on mission throughout the world, for their laudable and tireless efforts to promote and defend the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter.

My country is currently in a phase of peacebuilding, renewal and reconstruction. I myself am Chairman-in-Office of the Economic Community of Central African States, and I warmly welcome the invitation to take part in this meeting. My being here today is meaningful in two ways. It is a sign of the value that my country attributes to international peace and security. It also expresses our recognition of the valuable support the United Nations has ceaselessly given to my country and other countries in our subregion in the resolution of recurring conflicts that jeopardize our stability and undermine our possibilities of achieving development.

My most ardent desire is that with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, the solutions we come to at the end of this day of discussion make a substantial contribution to rendering more extensive, sound and efficient the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. Indeed, I believe that if these solutions, despite their imperfections, manage separately to contain the damage caused by human folly, together and working in concert they would obtain even better results towards a safer, more human world.

The Security Council should therefore do more than just encourage; it should support regional efforts to maintain peace and security. It should integrate them into its global vision and should consider them in light of what they really are: regional components of its universal mission.

Peace is so precious that the quest for it, however frustrating it may be at times, cannot afford to put up with discouragement or, even less, neglect. It cannot be left to chance; it must rather be built, managed and maintained. To achieve that, the factors that often jeopardize peace must be identified, and we must learn from the experience of societies and peoples who have succeeded in taming it and who over the years have been able to enjoy the rewards that peace brings.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have experienced years of war with our share of misery, misfortune and grief. Today, that regrettable interruption is fortunately finished. Certainly, pacification of the country is by no means complete. And even though our institutions have once again become legitimate, thanks to the fruition of political will following the constitutional referendum and general elections, they still need to be strengthened.

We have boundless determination to consolidate democracy; enhance the rule of law; complete the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; finalize the establishment of a professional, national and republican army and police force; operationalize an accountable judicial system that guarantees social peace; and create within the Great Lakes region, and more widely in Central Africa, a political environment stripped of all factors hindering peaceful coexistence among countries and peoples. It is in this context that the recent progress made, both internally and externally, including the signing of several agreements marking out the path towards peace in the east of our country, must be placed.

The persistence of conflict in the world in general and in Africa in particular has given rise to serious and complex problems. Among them are the large flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, the spread of infectious disease, the proliferation of increasingly harmful weapons and drugs, and the destruction of the environment and of biodiversity.

Fortunately, these issues, which form the daily lot of African societies, are at the heart of United Nations concerns. They therefore deserve joint attention and support of the United Nations and the African Union by virtue of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and of the powers of the two organizations, which in this case are complementary.

The United Nations is, in fact, the only organization that can lay down rules and standards that are imposed on all humankind and that can oblige the whole world to respect them, including by weapons. That is essential, given that the indirect and direct actors and protagonists in conflicts are sometimes not on the continents where the events are taking place. On the other hand, regional and subregional organizations are knowledgeable with regard to the sociological situation on the ground and are therefore the only ones that can even propose the most operational solutions to specific conflicts.

Recognizing this complementarity, we need to include among the special areas for cooperation between the United Nations and the AU the struggle against the illegal exploitation of natural resources in Africa; strengthening cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution, including the management of crises and peacebuilding and peacekeeping in post-conflict periods on the continent; supporting the 14 December 2006 decision by the AU Peace and Security Council regarding the Coordination and Consultation Mechanism between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council; and implementing the agreement on the organization of joint meetings between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council at least once a year. Moreover, by virtue of the cooperation thus strengthened, the Secretary-General should be invited to appeal to the relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to intensify their efforts to support cooperation with the African Union.

More broadly speaking, the United Nations system, whose primary responsibility is to promote and maintain international peace and security, should increase its assistance to the AU with a view to reinforcing the institutional and operational capacity of its Peace and Security Council, inter alia, in early warning, through the regular, continuous and coordinated exchange of information, training of military and civilian personnel, and jointly carrying out certain mediation missions.

United Nations support should therefore extend to AU peacekeeping missions in its various member States, particularly in the sphere of communication and logistics; to strengthening peacebuilding capacities before and after the cessation of hostilities; and to supporting humanitarian actions undertaken by the Peace and Security Council, in conformity with the Charter and the protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council. The United Nations should support the establishment of the standby force and the African Military Commission, as well as greater professionalization and better operating of the brigades existing within subregional organizations such as the Economic Community for Central African States and the Southern African Development Community; and strengthening the institutional capacities of the regional centre for training and peacekeeping for AU member States.

To ensure the implementation and follow-up on the prevention and resolution of conflicts, it is important to strengthen the good offices missions and mediation capacities of the Secretary-General. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Support Office should be strengthened, the Peacebuilding Fund should expand its activities and, if necessary, a special fund for peacekeeping should be established. Such a fund would have the mission and the merit of ensuring that regional organizations have lasting and predictable funding for the peacekeeping operations that they undertake.

On another front, the widely recognized inability of preventive diplomacy to put an end to the new forms of armed violence in Africa cannot be ignored. If we are to preserve peace and prevent or manage conflicts, there is certainly a need for dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation. But also, and in particular, there is a need for order, respect for national and international law, strong and effective institutions and, above all, justice. And, regardless of how noble and useful those institutions may be, it must be not only transitional justice, but also, and in particular, justice that promotes and unapologetically enforces the law.

Indeed, prosecuting those responsible for serious crimes, without neglecting the aspect of compensation for the victims of such crimes, is essential if we wish to create the conditions for true reconciliation, to prevent recidivism and to re-establish respect for the sanctity of life and the inviolability of human dignity.

The world is becoming more globalized every day, together with the challenges facing us. Yet, regional specificities remain as important as ever, and the effectiveness of solutions depends on them. The right balance between the global and the regional is therefore the answer. With regard to Africa, it is up to us who are meeting here today to find that happy medium.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Yipènè Bassole, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso, to take the floor.

Mr. Bassole (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on today's initiative and to convey to you the fraternal support and gratitude of the President of Burkina Faso for your dedication and personal involvement on behalf of peace and stability in Africa.

With regard to strengthening the relations between the United Nations and African regional organizations in the area of international peace and security, I should like to express our gratitude and support for the relevant recommendations made by the Secretary-General. In order to shorten my statement, Mr. President, I should like to associate myself with what you proposed and with what Mr. Kikwete, current Chairperson of the African Union, just said in his statement.

West Africa continues to be a theatre of conflicts, some of which are on the Security Council's agenda. As a subregional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has equipped itself with a mechanism for conflict prevention and settlement, the Mediation and Security Council, and with a Council of the Wise, which seeks to prevent or effectively manage the conflicts in the subregion. ECOWAS has always believed that it had the responsibility for resolving crises, within the well-known framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Thanks to the actions of ECOWAS, the situation in most countries in crisis is certainly encouraging, although, at the regional level, we are still concerned by the situations in northern Mali and northern Niger and by threats such as drug trafficking and the illicit circulation of weapons of war. Together with the Security Council and the Secretary-General, we are following in particular the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. In his capacities as current Chairman of ECOWAS and Facilitator of the inter-Ivorian dialogue, President Blaise Compaoré has been able, thanks to the vision and statesmanship of President Laurent Gbagbo, who took the courageous political initiative of a direct dialogue, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro and the Ivorian political class, to achieve the signing, on 4 March 2007, of the Ouagadougou Agreement and, subsequently, of its supplementary agreements.

Those agreements are, in our view, a successful example of good collaboration among the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. While they emphasize national ownership of the peace process, they were concluded as a result of regional facilitation and benefited from international assistance. One year after its signing, the Ouagadougou Agreement is recognized as having paved the way for a genuine way out of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. But, above all, it is the support of the principal actors for the process that has been the main driving force. Here, as elsewhere, that support was possible only because they were fully involved in defining dispute resolution mechanisms, assumed ownership of those mechanisms and participated in their implementation. Moreover, placing the negotiation process within a subregional framework certainly provided for a better definition of parameters and the establishment of the best possible conditions for success.

In order to illustrate the originality of the peace process, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire has described it in these terms: national ownership, subregional leadership and international assistance. We also note with satisfaction the engagement of Mr. Choi Young-Jin alongside us with humility and pragmatism. A good complementary sharing of responsibilities with the Representative of the Facilitator, Mr. Boureima Badini, has enabled us to have harmonious assistance in emerging from the crisis. However, we hope that, as with peacekeeping operations, mediations of this type also benefit from predictable, available and sufficient resources, since they have often been carried out in difficult contexts.

Those are, we believe, some of the lessons that could be drawn from this process. We earnestly hope that it will be successfully concluded with the adoption of an electoral timetable that sets the date for the first round of presidential elections on 30 November 2008. Our wish is that peace and stability will return very soon to Côte d'Ivoire and that the country can benefit as swiftly as possible from the support of the Peacebuilding Commission to ensure stability and economic progress there. Speaking of the Commission, we should like to take this opportunity to commend its work and to express our hope for greater involvement by the African Union in its activities.

I cannot conclude my statement without drawing the attention of the Security Council to the current international economic context, characterized by a general rise in the prices of foodstuffs, which has caused scattered riots likely to destabilize a good many countries, particularly in Africa, where the phenomenon of poverty could be further exacerbated. It would thus be desirable, from the perspective of strengthening the relations between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of maintaining international peace and security, to place particular emphasis on socio-economic factors, such as price increases, which are likely to cause new crises in some of our States.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Special Envoy of the President of Viet Nam, to take the floor.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the delegation of South Africa on your effective leadership of the work of the Council this month. We highly appreciate your initiative to hold a debate on this important topic, and I am confident that, under your skilful leadership, this meeting will arrive at a successful conclusion.

We are facing fast and complex changes in the world, in which peace and cooperation for development remain the dominant trend, though challenges arising from both traditional and non-traditional security issues have increased at the regional level. More than ever before, the international community recognizes the pressing need for a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in responding to challenges to regional and international peace and security.

The Charter of the United Nations places on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite the fact that the Security Council has yet to find a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, notwithstanding tremendous efforts, the initial positive steps in the transition from conflict to peace in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi and recently the Democratic Republic of the Congo are testimony to what the Security Council can do to bring peace and security to the people of Africa.

As the Secretary-General noted in his 2007 report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), there has been a dramatic increase in the range of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit agreed to expand consultation and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations through formalized agreements and, as appropriate, the involvement of regional organizations in the work of the Security Council. Various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on cooperation between the United Nations and specific regional organizations help further promote such cooperation.

On the implementation front, we are convinced that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations should be based on their complementary capacities and comparative advantages, making full use of their experience, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the relevant statutes of regional organizations. Regional organizations, owing to their most immediate connection to regional particularities, are well positioned to understand the root causes of armed conflicts and have unique advantages to detect potential threats early and find peaceful solutions to those problems. Better coordination and the development of a more effective partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations will strengthen the capacity of the Security Council to fulfil its task of maintaining international peace and security. At the same time, the United Nations and the Security Council should pay greater attention to the issue of providing political, physical and financial assistance to peacekeeping efforts of regional organizations that lack resources.

Equally important, possible modalities of partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations must be further explored and expanded for mutual reinforcement, taking into account the differing characteristics of regional organizations in terms of membership, resource availability and institutional capacity, as well as the uniqueness of each conflict situation.

Africa, the second largest and second most populous continent, is where most regional conflicts are taking place. Together with United Nations peacekeeping operations, the African Union (AU) has proactively contributed to the mediation, reconciliation and reconstruction processes in many countries such as Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda and Western Sahara. The Governments and the peoples of Africa and the African Union must be commended for their determined efforts in this connection.

We welcome the adoption of the Declaration signed by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission in November 2006 on enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of capacity-building over the next 10 years (A/61/630, annex), as well as the ongoing close coordination between the two secretariats. Given the many existing challenges ahead, Viet Nam is of the view that the AU should be supported in playing a greater role and should therefore enjoy greater cooperation from the United Nations in term of financial and logistical assistance for building the capacity of its peacekeeping forces, so as to consolidate peace in fragile post-conflict countries and help prevent a relapse into violence. The difficulties facing the African Union Mission in Somalia and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur are vivid examples demonstrating how necessary this is.

In our region of South-East Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has become an important mechanism for strengthening peace, friendship and cooperation in the region. ASEAN has also attached great importance to fostering consultations and exchanging experiences and best practices with other regional organizations in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America to promote multilateral endeavours for peace, stability and development.

As a brother and friend of Africa and as a member of ASEAN, Viet Nam has always been at the forefront of any efforts aimed at strengthening the partnership for peace and development between the two organizations. We look forward to further promoting these efforts in the interest of peace, security and development in Asia, Africa and throughout the world.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the President of Somalia, to take the floor.

President Ahmed: It is my pleasure to be here at this special meeting of the Security Council. I am grateful to those who brought about our gathering here today to debate the important issue of strengthening the relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm Somalia's appreciation and its approval of the Security Council, which has taken a consistent and laudable role at each juncture of Somalia's civil strife and State failure. The Security Council, as all may remember, had the resolve and the political will to invoke the morally compelling doctrine of humanitarian intervention, thereby successfully reversing a disastrous famine that could have potentially wiped out millions of Somalis.

It is my considered judgement that Somalia once again needs courageous intervention of this body to intervene in the situation in Somalia by urgently sending an international force to assist the Transitional Federal Government in implementing its peace and stabilization plan.

The conflict in Somalia, which was once among clans, is today about extreme ideology and predatory economic and commercial interests. The conflict is in fact between those who want to live free in peace and harmony under democratic governance and those who espouse violence and want to keep Somalia in the status quo of lawlessness and anarchy.

The solution to the problem in Somalia therefore has three basic but important ingredients, namely, re-establishing the collapsed Somali State, furthering the reconciliation process and stabilizing the situation and providing security.

On reconciliation, we conducted the largest reconciliation congress in the history of Somalia. The National Reconciliation Congress, which was held in Mogadishu, was attended by close to 3,000 delegates and attracted many more peace-loving Somalis to the city. The National Reconciliation Congress produced corrective solutions in government affairs and a road map to a fair and free election that would lead Somalia to a democratic transition in 2009. In addition, the Transitional Federal Government has time and again shown a willingness to talk to those who oppose our Government.

Furthermore, I would like to formally restate at this meeting of the Security Council that I am for peace and reconciliation in Somalia. My only purpose in leading Somalia during this critical period of our history is to bring peace and lawfulness back to my country. I would like to state categorically that I want to witness the renaissance of Somalia as a progressive democratic State at peace with itself, with its neighbours and with the rest of the world. I am willing to do whatever it takes to promote peace and stability in my country.

The third basic and important ingredient of providing security is where we have not performed well, and it is where we cannot make progress without significant support from the international community.

Security is of paramount importance to any country of the world, and it is a prerequisite for the rest of the priorities to which I have referred. The lack of security in Somalia is compounded by the continuation of the United Nations embargo.

The Security Council must assist the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government in the stabilization of the country by, first, reviewing the merits of the arms embargo on Somalia and promptly lifting it; secondly, authorizing the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force with a mandate to help Somalia to achieve fuller reconciliation, stabilization, disarmament and durable peace; and, thirdly, helping Somalia in the formation of the security organs of the Government, such as the police, military and other security forces.

Finally, the prevalence of pirates off the Somali coast is hampering international trade and international marine safety and navigation. As Somalia cannot at the moment guard its long coastline, we would want to authorize the international community to take action to combat piracy on Somalia's high seas until we can effectively undertake the security of our territorial waters.

The President: I now invite Her Excellency Mrs. Rama Yade, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights of France, to take the floor.

Mrs. Yade (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank South Africa and President Thabo Mbeki for having organized this meeting on a subject that is at the heart of the Security Council's mandate and work.

In an age when the destinies of peoples and nations are linked, peace and security on the African continent are challenges we all share. The future of Africa is also our future. Its successes or failures today will be ours tomorrow. It is by working together that we will meet the challenges of development, peace and security.

Motivated by that powerful conviction, last September President Sarkozy took the initiative to hold a high-level Security Council meeting on the issue of peace and security in Africa. Africa must find its rightful place in globalization. Global affairs cannot be addressed without Africa. There will be no successful globalization without a strong Africa that is sure of itself. But its efforts and successes must be supported and backed up by the international community. France therefore believes in a strengthened partnership between the United Nations and African Union.

Africa is a continent on the move. It is part of the momentum in the world. Africa's youthful population, vibrant and impatient, is sweeping it along and opening it to the winds of modernity and democracy. Sustained economic growth is encouraging remarkable successes in many countries. Its active and growing role in international bodies is bearing fruit in the settlement of many conflicts.

Africa is a continent that is organizing itself. The African Union, whose institutions and role continue to develop in parallel to subregional organizations, reflects its desire to take its future into its own hands. The African Union is already taking on a substantial role in international responses to crises.

But Africa is also a continent that continues to face considerable challenges, beginning with those related to poverty, health, climate change and access to natural resources, especially water. Africa is endeavouring to meet those challenges.

We are determined to help it through concrete actions — with regard to food security, for example. The riots caused by hunger are triggering a new emergency, with catastrophic results. How can we accept that people are dying of hunger in the twenty-first century? We have seen in recent days the tragic consequences of the sharp rise and volatility of prices for basic foodstuffs, which have been hurting the most vulnerable African populations for many months. Yet food security is one of the conditions for peace, stability and development in Africa.

The international community must mobilize immediately to find solutions with the World Food Programme as a matter of urgency and over the long term, by placing agricultural development and land management at the top of the international agenda. Peace and development are not built with empty stomachs. France and the European Union are preparing proposals in that connection. The United Nations must act to meet this new global challenge. Like the African Union, the Organization should help African countries to meet those challenges and should do so in four areas.

First, the United Nations should take preventive action in order to avert open crises. France supports the

Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen United Nations efforts at preventive diplomacy. The early warning system established by the African Union is an important development for the continent in that regard.

The African Union is setting up its peace and security architecture so as to be able to prevent and address by itself the continent's crises. For its part, the United Nations continues to improve its conflict-prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding capacities through reform of the Secretariat and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. The relations developing between the Security Council, on which the United Nations Charter confers the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the African Union Peace and Security Council are a good illustration of cooperation between the two organizations.

The second objective is to respond to crises. To meet those challenges, the United Nations Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter also provides for the role of regional organizations in that respect. Institutional development is not an end in itself, however. It is on the basis of results that cooperation between our two organizations has to be judged. In Darfur, for instance, acting in an original way, the two organizations are deploying a hybrid operation and conducting joint mediation. It is not always an easy situation to manage. The deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is blocked at this time. It is imperative that the Operation be able to discharge its mandate to help the people of Darfur, who are the primary victims, and the humanitarian operators who come to their aid.

Indeed, we are increasingly concerned by the rise in the number of serious human rights violations against women, through increased sexual violence, and children in situations of armed conflict in particular. The fight against impunity must be an essential element of our action. States must cooperate with the International Criminal Court. Without resolute action against impunity, there can be no peace or lasting reconciliation.

Peace and national reconciliation processes must also be supported until free elections, transparent and open to all, can be held, as in Côte d'Ivoire. Such security, humanitarian and political aspects go hand in hand. They cannot advance without all the others, as we are also seeing in the case of Somalia, where we cannot hope to improve living conditions for a greatly suffering population over the long term without progress in the political process. That is the thrust of our common efforts.

The third objective is to assist democratic change and further respect for human rights. We must heed the call of peoples and civil societies for the rule of law, honest and transparent elections and the protection of fundamental freedoms. We see the consequences for stability and civil peace when overtures to democracy come late. Such was the case in Kenya. It is the case today in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean people must not be deprived of its victory, which is the victory of democracy.

The final objective is to build peace in countries that have successfully completed a transition process. I am thinking of the current efforts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and the Great Lakes region — Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — with Governments democratically elected after a transition process.

I would like to conclude by speaking of Europe's commitment. France fully aligns itself with the statement that will be made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union (EU). There will be no strong Europe without a strong Africa. That is the full meaning of the partnership reached between the European Union and Africa in Lisbon in December. The European Union is deeply committed to strengthening African peacekeeping capacities, support for African Union operations and the conduct of United Nations-mandated operations in Africa, such as the current EU-led peacekeeping operation in Chad and the Central African Republic, which seeks to protect people and facilitate humanitarian assistance in regions neighbouring Darfur affected by that crisis. France, during its upcoming presidency of the European Union, will emphasize cooperative action in support of the African peace and security architecture, and support for the processes of stabilization and reconciliation.

France resolutely supports the ambition of Africa and its peoples to build a continent of stability and prosperity that takes a full part in the workings of the world. We are fully involved in that effort under the auspices of the United Nations, alongside the African Union and with all Africa's partners.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Pierre Chevalier, Special Envoy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Chevalier (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to commend and, above all, to thank you, Sir, for organizing today's very important debate. We welcome the resolve of Africa and its leadership to bring peace, security and development to their continent. I can assure you that we share your conviction that those objectives can be achieved only if mutual cooperation is genuinely strengthened.

Belgium fully endorses the statement to be made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union (EU), setting out the results of and prospects for partnership between Africa and the EU. Belgium also welcomes the impressive progress made over the past few years in cooperation between the United Nations and the EU and the United Nations and the African Union (AU), as well as in their trilateral relationship, in the area of conflict management.

Belgium firmly believes in the added value of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We believe that such cooperation should be based on a solid mutual understanding of what it can yield and of what can legitimately be expected of it. If a regional organization decides to establish a peacekeeping operation authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VIII of the Charter, the Council is validating the international legality of the operation. Such authorization, however, does not imply that the United Nations is substituting itself for the regional organization or that it is automatically assuming political, logistical or financial responsibility.

The situation is somewhat different when the United Nations decides to support the operation of a regional organization. In the case of a joint operation, the United Nations and the regional organization are both responsible for the preparation and conduct of the operation. That is a particularly complex form of cooperation that can succeed only if it is based on a common political vision.

In order to avoid all misunderstandings, appropriate consultations between the organizations are vital, especially in the initial decision-making phase. Such consultations must help to prevent decisions made by one party from taking the other by surprise and to facilitate cooperation in their implementation. They should also allow us better to determine the kind of cooperation that is most appropriate, based on the nature and geographical characteristics of a given conflict.

Common experiences and lessons learned will help us to improve cooperation between international organizations. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is in and of itself a unique experiment. However, the stakes are extremely high, since they involve the fate of a local population that has endured terrible suffering in recent years. Unfortunately, we must conclude that progress in deploying the mission has been far too slow. At the same time, the political process that was to be the foundation of the peacekeeping operation seems to be at a standstill. In that context, a strong, shared political vision of the two organizations involved — the United Nations and the AU — is critical.

In Central Africa, too, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi have benefited from useful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EU has contributed to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the EU-led force in that country, while in Burundi, significant cooperation has been established with the AU through the Regional Initiative and the United Nations Office in Burundi on the question of the Forces nationales de libération.

In spite of the great progress made in those countries — with regard to the democratic electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to give just one significant example — the challenges are considerable. Peace remains fragile, and civilians, who deserve the international community's protection, continue to face daily violence. Belgium will remain strongly committed in its support for the countries and peoples of the Great Lakes region, and we will continue to work closely with the United Nations, with African regional organizations and with the European Union. In that connection, the Belgian Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Development and Defence will travel together to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Burundi next week.

Turning to the conflict in Somalia, let me first commend the members of the African Union Mission in Somalia for the work they have done in difficult conditions. The Mission clearly demonstrates that international efforts to bring security to the Somali people will achieve lasting results only if they are based on sincere efforts towards national political reconciliation. Belgium therefore fully supports the integrated and gradual approach recently proposed by the Secretary-General. Such an approach gives us another opportunity to develop cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations and to demonstrate the value it can add.

Finally, I wish to say a few words about the situation in Zimbabwe. I would like to stress that Belgium is particularly concerned at the increased tension in that country. We join others — in particular the Secretary-General — in calling for decisive action, including through the immediate release of the results of the recent presidential election, in order to prevent the deterioration of a situation that is already very tense. I agree with Prime Minister Gordon Brown that a very clear, unanimous signal is needed.

Let me conclude with some observations about the general principles of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In the view of Belgium, improved governance is imperative in that regard. A Government that meets expectations, merits trust and is committed to democracy and human rights will be better equipped to eliminate the root causes of conflict. Natural resources can be an important factor here: depending on how they are managed, they can either fuel conflict or bring a peace dividend. Responsibility in this sphere lies in particular with national Governments, but the United Nations and regional organizations should take account of this dimension in their activities aimed at restoring, maintaining and building peace.

The European Union is an example of a regional cooperation project which has developed in a way that none of its founders could have imagined 50 years ago. The African Union, for its part, is powerfully committed to blazing its own trail — a trail that is not yet completely charted. The European Union and Belgium are ready to assist it in developing the capacities necessary to overcome the challenges it faces. I welcome the similar readiness of the United Nations, which will be reflected in the adoption of a draft resolution on cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations. Belgium commends the two organizations for that outcome, and hopes that it will be promptly implemented both in letter and, especially, in spirit.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, to take the floor.

Mr. Zenawi (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to join previous speakers in commending you for your initiative, in South Africa's capacity as President of the Security Council for this month, to organize this timely meeting. The meeting could pave the way to more effective collaboration between our institutions.

We all know that primary responsibility for international peace and security lies with the Security Council. In that regard, the Council has been dealing with security challenges in Africa on a continuous basis. Indeed, as our continent has over the years had more than its fair share of conflicts, African issues have constituted a very significant part of the Security Council's deliberations on peace and security. We in Africa too have been exerting efforts to prevent, resolve and manage conflicts on our continent, including through the establishment of a comprehensive peace and security architecture within the African Union. We bring a number of strengths to the table in resolving African conflicts.

I am confident that we would all agree that there is a great deal of room for fruitful collaboration between the two institutions, consistent with the Security Council's primacy in terms of its responsibility for international peace and security. In that regard, I welcome the report of the Secretary-General on this matter (S/2008/186) and, in particular, his proposal to establish a panel to look at the issue of ensuring predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for peace operations of the African Union. I would like to urge the Security Council to speedily consider the recommendations of such a panel, and to act on them, as such a funding arrangement could be crucial in saving many African lives. As this process is bound to take some time, I would urge the Security Council, in the meantime, to support the African Union in its peacekeeping operations on the continent, particularly in Somalia. The African Union was unable to deploy the full contingent of peacekeepers in Somalia solely because of a lack of funding, and with the support of the Security Council Africa will be better able to support the people and the Government of Somalia in achieving peace.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, to take the floor.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased, Sir, to welcome you and to congratulate you on the Republic of South Africa's successful presidency of the Security Council. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of leaders of African and European States, other representatives and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Such high interest in today's Council meeting reflects the international community's commitment to meeting the challenge of bringing stability to the situation in Africa and ensuring sustainable development on the continent.

The threats that African States face today can be overcome only through collective political and diplomatic action and through unified efforts by African countries and the international community that supports them. The development of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union will help to achieve that. The provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter provide a firm legal basis for the implementation of African peacekeeping operations sanctioned or supported by the Security Council.

Combining the efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, taking account of the comparative advantages offered by that important regional organization, is proving its effectiveness. Today, regional and subregional organizations in Africa are participating actively in preventing and settling conflict situations and are demonstrating increasing willingness and ability to assume responsibility for resolving African problems.

The potential of African countries to counter crises must be developed in every respect to comprehensively encompass the areas of crisis prevention, crisis resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is essential that the conflict prevention and settlement mechanisms created on the continent begin to work at full strength. Russia has consistently urged that the peacekeeping activities of the African Union be appropriately bolstered by the authority of the Security Council and by the world Organization's logistical and technical capacity, on the understanding that we are not talking about directly financing such activities from the United Nations budget.

It is essential to improve the practice of regular reporting by regional bodies to the Security Council, especially where their peacekeeping operations have a mandate from this organ, with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our view that the main responsibility for effective implementation of the mandates of those operations rests squarely on regional organizations and their members.

In the area of practical interaction between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), the impulse for which came from decisions of the 2005 Summit, there is already substantial accumulated positive experience. Joint peacekeeping forces in Darfur were established under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union and are making efforts to advance the political process. In Chad and the Central African Republic, we have established a multi-component United Nations peacekeeping presence, acting with support from the European Union operations. It is important through these joint efforts to ensure that innovative models of cooperation prove their effectiveness.

On the agenda is the comprehensive strengthening of the partnership between the United Nations and African Union. We are in favour of strengthening cooperation between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. Constructive dialogue between the two organs is taking place on a regular basis. Provisions in the joint communiqué issued at the end of the meeting between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa have become an important springboard for this process. We would expect that tomorrow's second joint meeting of these two organs will move this interaction forward.

The Russian Federation is enhancing its contribution to the settlement of African conflicts. Our country is actively participating in developing and implementing programmes for international assistance in Africa, including through the Group of Eight. Specialized Russian educational institutions are training African peacekeeping personnel. Russian peacekeepers are engaged in all United Nations operations on the continent. Furthermore, we are planning an ongoing upgrade of our level of participation in United Nations peacekeeping activity in Africa as well as in other regions.

In conclusion, I would like to express the willingness of the Russian delegation to support South Africa's draft Security Council resolution aimed at strengthening interaction with regional organizations and especially with the African Union.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is indeed a great honour, Mr. Mbeki, to see you personally assume the presidency of Security Council today. It is my pleasure to convey to you the greetings and support of your brother, Colonel Al-Qaddafi.

We are also honoured to have with us heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegations. We welcome the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Oumar Konaré, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. We certainly appreciate all of their efforts.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, as it paves the way for our meeting tomorrow with the African Union Peace and Security Council. We have set great expectations on that meeting, as the topic falls squarely within the core functions and objectives of our two Councils as stated in their statutes. The topic is very important and not enough time has been provided to expand on it. Therefore I shall provide a written statement for distribution and will merely stress some important points here today.

My country fully agrees with the statement made by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the African Union, Mr. Jakaya Kikwete.

This proceeds from the important concept paper prepared by the presidency stressing the need for a practical movement ensuring effective long-term participation by both regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter, in Chapter VIII, specifically recognizes such a role for those organizations. Many international resolutions and declarations have stressed the importance of the participation of regional and subregional organizations — particularly with regard to conflict prevention and finding effective joint measures to deal with the root causes of threats to peace — as being fundamental international commitments and objectives provided for in the United Nations Charter.

My country, Libya, has been committed to the prevention and settlement of African conflicts and, as an African member of this Security Council, we have come to understand the urgent need for a more comprehensive international framework for such efforts. There has certainly been recognition of Africa's development and its role in a collective security organization based primarily on the efforts of regional and subregional organizations in the prevention of disputes.

However, let me also state that, frankly, we continue to need to prove that practical measures must take precedence over rhetoric and that long-term conflict resolution remain the priority. The Secretariat continues to lack the necessary resources for logistical support of national and regional capacities, and therefore insufficient efforts have been made to prevent conflicts at their source. The price has been very high. We now face humanitarian situations with spreading tragedies and ramifications. We are also incurring enormous expenditures related to conflict management, as well as peacekeeping operations with no end in sight.

No one, of course, would argue that there is one simple prescription for prevention. Such an effort would require a diagnosis of the causes of such conflicts, which are complex and interrelated. The prescription is necessarily complex: internal, regional and, specifically, international.

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter includes, among the purposes and principles of the Organization, upholding principles of equal rights and self-determination for all peoples and assisting them in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

There has been increasing appreciation for the growing role of the African Union, under difficult circumstances, particularly since the establishment of its Peace and Security Council, as an entity entrusted with decision-making, in partnership with the United Nations. The Council has been active in many of the cases that have been raised here this morning.

Africa does not seek a narrow continental interest nor do we seek to be dealt with with modesty, as the late leader Léopold Senghor said. Africa's security and development are an essential component of the collective global security system. Furthermore, the mandate and procedures of the United Nations Security

Council cannot be separated from those of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

Structural strategies aimed at conflict prevention in Africa have evolved as a result of valuable reports submitted regularly by the Secretary-General, particularly since the end of the last century. Two important reports have been submitted in the past few months. It is now up to us to implement the recommendations set out in those reports and to capitalize on the exceptional momentum achieved thus far. In Addis Ababa last year, the foundations were laid for relations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. Annual meetings have been scheduled. Sharing experiences and information with regard to current conflicts and seeking ways to cooperate in order to prevent such conflicts have become established practices that are welcomed by all.

Finally, I believe that we must now begin our work to formalize a global-regional partnership, in which all United Nations bodies should be encouraged to participate. Such a partnership should guarantee, in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter, the integration of resources, priorities, capacities and mandates, assigning them according to comparative advantages and areas of strength. Contrary to the notion that the United Nations must not provide funding unless it has control, it should provide support to the African Union and its security structure both logistically and financially. We hope that that will be the outcome of today's deliberations. Only such a partnership will enable us to face the real challenges and, as stated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General, to develop more planned, consistent and reliable arrangements.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the delegation of South Africa for the draft resolution before us. We fully endorse it and look forward to its adoption at the end of this meeting.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Mompati Merafhe, Vice-President of Botswana, to take the floor.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We are particularly grateful to you for your initiative in organizing this high-level meeting to deliberate on an issue of the utmost importance to Africa and the wider international community. Indeed, the fact that you are presiding over this meeting is a clear testimony of your commitment and of the determination of your country, South Africa, to consistently use its membership of the Council to elevate to a global level the African agenda of achieving durable peace, security and sustainable development. Our presence here today is a clear demonstration of our full support for this initiative.

We strongly believe in the instrumentality of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Security Council, as the organ vested with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Peace is indivisible. The search for solutions to conflict is the responsibility of all. It is therefore imperative and urgent that we assume collective ownership of these challenges.

Africa has the political will and determination to work alongside other countries in the prevention of conflict as well as in the management and resolution of disputes. In that respect, Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides for cooperation with regional organizations, such as the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Therefore, there can be no doubt that, when the African Union deploys a peacekeeping mission in an African country, it does so on behalf of the Security Council and of the international community as a whole. As the United Nations recognizes the advantages of regional organizations in responding timeously to an outbreak of war in a given region, it is necessary that that recognition be translated into practical measures that can strengthen this relationship for the common good. A clearly defined partnership would achieve not only faster results in alleviating human suffering, but also better cohesion and alignment and efficient utilization of resources in peacekeeping operations.

Regional organizations, such as the African Union, have a crucial role to play in enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to respond more timeously and efficiently in the prevention of armed hostilities. That is vital if we are to save human lives as well as improve the credibility of the mission of the United Nations.

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union embodies the strong resolve of Africa to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. It is a dependable mechanism that the international community should support and put to good use.

We have to acknowledge that there are capacity constraints. A lack of adequate resources severely hampers Africa's ability to successfully execute and sustain peacekeeping operations. We believe that financial and material resources can be mobilized to assist regional organizations in effectively carrying out peacekeeping operations.

Issues related to peace and security in Africa are urgent and important. This is not the first time that the Council has considered this matter at the summit level. There is a time to talk and negotiate. Clearly, there should also be a time for action and results.

In that respect, it is our expectation that the outcome of this meeting will be practical and measurable. We urge the Council to adopt a draft resolution that can set in motion concrete measures aimed at translating into reality our hope that the necessary support will be provided to the African Union peacekeeping missions. We strongly believe that the proposals put forward are realistic and achievable. We encourage the Council to adopt them. We must now put in place a granite foundation in the area of conflict prevention and management, to ensure that the continuing threat to development and economic prosperity in Africa is brought to an end.

I wish to conclude by reiterating what I said before this Council two years ago. Our business as States Members of the United Nations is to take out of business the business of making war. We must invest more resources in the capacity of both the United Nations and the African Union to make peace. Mediation and good offices must be strengthened, so that conflict does not break out because of a poverty of diplomacy or a lack of capacity to prevent, manage and resolve disputes.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Neven Jurica, Permanent Representative of Croatia, to take the floor.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this exchange of views on peace and security in Africa. We sincerely believe that today's deliberations will help us to take stock of the lessons learned and to better understand future challenges. Let me also join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his pertinent and valuable remarks, as well as for his active engagement in promoting effective cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations in general and the African Union in particular.

Croatia recognizes the primary responsibility and leading role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, as the only global body mandated with that task. Nevertheless, that global task can be accomplished more effectively with active engagement at the regional, subregional and national levels. Optimally, those three levels of responsibility — global, regional and national — should, owing to their intertwining nature, act in harmony, respecting the principles of subsidiarity, division of labour and effectiveness, in order to achieve peace and security. In that respect, regional organizations should assume their share of the responsibility, as appropriate, in this global-regional partnership mechanism.

The unique knowledge and local expertise of regional organizations often place them in a better position to assess regional and local situations.

The question remains of how to make the best use of these assessments. Having said that, Croatia believes that the Security Council should evaluate regional initiatives on their own merits and contributions, especially as they are complementary to the continued and active engagement of the overall United Nations system, for example in supporting peace processes and peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Here, we come to the first point that my delegation would like to raise: capacity-building as a way of enhancing regional organizations' effectiveness and efficiency in conflict prevention, management and resolution. My delegation attaches particular importance to security sector reform, as discussed in numerous reports of the Secretary-General, in particular taking into consideration the input and expertise of his Special Representatives in the field. In that respect, we acknowledge some encouraging developments in West and Central Africa.

Secondly, we would like to single out one particular concept, conflict prevention, which could and should be strengthened and given more prominence in the work of this global-regional partnership. We can all agree that experience teaches us that any crisis can be better handled in its early stages. Therefore, an approach encompassing a better early warning system as a means to identify potential crises before they emerge is of utmost importance. On that point, we welcome the meeting regarding Zimbabwe convened by the Southern African Development Community last week in Lusaka.

My delegation is very concerned about the recent situation in Zimbabwe, especially as we firmly believe that every nation has the right to enjoy the benefits of democracy, and not to have them denied, as seems to be the case in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, Kenya provided a good example of timely intervention by a regional mediation mission, led by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The third point we would like to make relates to the need for new thinking and innovative functional approaches. There is one lesson that we always like to repeat: there can be no one-size-fits-all approach, and any attempt to build upon such an approach necessarily leads to failure. The Sudan is an excellent example, where the Security Council is working together with the African Union to create a special relationship in addressing the ongoing crisis in that country. Thought should be given to using a similar model in other conflict areas.

Fourthly, in response to the growing need to develop a comprehensive approach encompassing political, military, humanitarian and development components in the post-conflict period, we recognize the valuable goals and role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission has been successful in its tailored approach, and within that framework we see an excellent opportunity for meaningful cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

Allow me to reflect here upon a matter that my Government deems to be of utmost significance. There has been a great deal of talk about the danger of the culture of impunity taking root in some of the conflict-ridden areas of Africa. We would like to reiterate that there can be no lasting peace without justice — and development, of course — and that justice is vital to any reconciliation process and to the building of a healthy society.

Finally, Croatia acknowledged that the formation of the African Union back in 2002 was a major step forward in strengthening Africa's regional political-security structures and conflict prevention mechanisms. Also, I would like to note that Croatia established formal relations with the African Union in May 2007, and subsequently participated in an African Union summit for the first time, in Accra in June and July 2007.

Croatia also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your personal dedication to peace and stability in Africa and elsewhere, and for your presence here at this fruitful debate.

The President: I invite His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent Representative of the United States, to take the floor.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I would like to thank you, President Mbeki, for convening this important meeting.

President Bush noted upon his return from a recent trip to Africa that there have been striking changes in Africa, which are the result of a new generation of African leaders. The United States supports democratic transition and economic development in African countries, working in particular in post-conflict situations to strengthen democratic institutions and across Africa assisting civil society organizations in combating gender-based violence, trafficking in persons and other human rights violations.

Despite substantial improvements, we face enormous challenges. The focus of today's discussion is on how the Security Council can cooperate and enhance its relationship with the continent's regional organizations, particularly the African Union (AU).

As we all know, United Nations peacekeeping is overstretched. The supply of well equipped peacekeepers does not meet the demand. We must find ways to use existing resources effectively and efficiently and to build capacity, particularly regional capacity, to do more. This will take time, so we must look at both short-term and longer-term solutions. With that in mind, I would like to make five points.

First, the Security Council needs to reassess how we plan for and sustain peacekeeping operations. Our peacekeeping operations should be goal-oriented in nature and should clearly define missions, timelines and budgets. Peacekeeping operations should be a means to an end, rather than a substitute for resolving conflicts or an excuse for delay. While we understand the risks of leaving too soon, we should look to terminate non-viable peacekeeping operations. The goal must be to encourage self-reliance and free up forces and funds for where they are needed most: places like Darfur, where the United Nations is collaborating with the African Union to address a dire regional crisis.

On the subject of Darfur, the United Nations and AU have embarked on a historic cooperative effort: the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Although it is much too early to judge whether that cooperation has been successful, the early results suggest that UNAMID will not become a model to be followed in other places of shared United Nations-AU concerns. The United States continues to call for the immediate and full deployment of UNAMID, both to improve the situation on the ground in Darfur and to demonstrate that the AU and the United Nations can form formidable partnerships. The Government of the Sudan must lift all restrictions and delays to allow for all UNAMID troops and equipment to be deployed.

Secondly, the AU must enhance its capacity to plan and execute viable peacekeeping operations, and we should help. As we all know, the African Union needs to build increased administrative, logistical and military planning capacities, as well as better financial accountability and transparency. To that end, the United States has substantial programmes to assist these efforts. We have provided significant support in the form of logistical support and technical expertise to the African standby force, to the AU Commission's emerging Strategic Planning and Management Unit and to the AU's Situation Room. The United States continues to provide significant logistical capability in support of both United Nations and AU peacekeeping efforts in Africa. We are prepared to work with the AU and other regional organizations to further enhance their capacity, and we call on all other countries to step up their bilateral support as well. The United Nations should prioritize its efforts to help the AU deal with its deficits in financial management and administrative capacities. Improvement in this area will undoubtedly help donor countries feel more comfortable in giving resources to AU missions, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The United States would like to recognize the AU's efforts to stabilize and improve the situation in Somalia. Over the past two years, the United States has provided over $57 million to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and we continue to seek additional resources to support that critical effort. We call on all AU member States to send forces for that important mission, and we call on the international community to donate generously so that AMISOM can deploy fully. In addition to AMISOM, we support the Secretary-General's call for a credible political process and security presence, which the United States believes should lead to a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

Thirdly, we must work with African Union member States to increase their national peacekeeping capacities. The United States is committed to helping African States to increase their capacities. Since 2005, the United States has trained over 34,000 African peacekeepers from 19 countries and has provided $375 million to increase global capacity for peacekeeping operations in Africa and elsewhere. Additionally, we see an opportunity for several African countries to increase their capacity for combined and joint operations by stressing interoperability in equipment, training and communication and by building professional relationships among officers of all African nations. Steps such as these will enhance overall AU peacekeeping capacity and will be a focus for the new United States Africa Command.

Fourthly, funding for AU peacekeeping capacities is important. The United States is well aware of the financial shortfalls that the AU faces, especially in peacekeeping missions. We welcome the exploration of realistic ways to address the financing challenges faced by regional peacekeeping missions. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a panel of distinguished persons from the African Union, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to seek viable alternative and cost-effective means of financial support, such as the establishment of a trust fund or enhanced donor coordination.

Fifthly, with regard to closer United Nations-AU cooperation, in the realm of peace and security, we applaud the formation of the joint United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations-AU Peace Support Team and its work in the areas of mission planning and the management of logistics and resources. In the area of conflict prevention and mediation, the United States is encouraged by the efforts currently under way by the Department of Political Affairs to strengthen AU conflict prevention and mitigation capacities. On humanitarian action, the United States appreciates the Secretary-General's recommendations on enhancing the AU's early warning systems through the development of a multi-risk early warning tool that includes socio-political, natural, human-made and economic vulnerabilities.

Such a system would have been particularly useful in places like Zimbabwe. The United States remains extremely concerned about the situation there. Despite significant pre-election irregularities, the people of Zimbabwe expressed their will during the 29 March elections. It has been 18 days since the elections and the results of the presidential race still have not been announced. However, based on publicly posted results, it is clear that the people of Zimbabwe voted overwhelmingly for change. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission needs to immediately release the presidential election results and ensure their veracity in a transparent manner.

We are gravely concerned about the escalating politically motivated violence perpetrated by security forces and ruling party militias that target opposition supporters in rural areas. The Government and its supporters must desist immediately from violence and intimidation, act with restraint, respect human rights and allow the electoral process to continue unfettered.

We commend the efforts of the Southern African Development Community to urge the Zimbabwean Government and electoral authorities to address the unfolding crisis. The time has come for the United Nations to support their efforts through a joint mission with the African Union to ensure that the electoral authorities act in conformity with the regional organization's principles for democratic elections, that the political violence ceases and that the will of the Zimbabwean people is upheld. In that regard, we welcome and support the Secretary-General's call today for international observers.

Finally, I would once again like to thank President Mbeki for his leadership in convening this important meeting. We understand and appreciate South Africa's interest in keeping the Security Council's attention focused on Africa and in developing a more effective working relationship between the Security Council and the African Union.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Special Envoy and Adviser to the President of the Republic of the Sudan, to take the floor.

Mr. Ismail (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, on behalf of your brother President Omer Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, I have the pleasure to express our sincere gratitude for the kind invitation to participate in this important debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), in the maintenance of international peace and security. I should like to inform the Council that an urgent domestic matter has prevented President Al-Bashir from taking part in this meeting. He has entrusted me to deliver the following message.

> "Allow me to express the appreciation of the Government and the people of the Sudan for the positive and historic initiative of South Africa and you yourself, President Thabo Mbeki, to hold this summit meeting. As members know, this is the fifth time that the Security Council has met at the summit level since the establishment of the United Nations, in 1945. With its long and unique experience and wise leadership, South Africa is the country most worthy of putting forward such an important initiative to promote concerted efforts to settle disputes and build peace on behalf of the international community. That heritage is a source of pride for Africa as it repeatedly leads the world's peace-loving States to international achievements, such as the elimination of apartheid in your country of South Africa.
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> "Following the many political, economic and social changes that have taken place on the continent, Africa is now strongly playing an important and historic role on the world stage. Those changes have included the establishment of the African Union and its various associated institutions, including the Pan-African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the Peace and Security Council, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, among others. This is unquestionably a reflection of Africa's determination to reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, in order to make it more transparent and effective, to

promote democracy in international relations and to respond to new facts and challenges on the ground that did not exist when the United Nations was established in the middle of the past century. The Sudan is determined to cooperate with the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping, whether in the framework of the Naivasha Agreement or under the Darfur Peace Agreement. That places us in a special position to talk about the item before the Council at today's meeting.

"Providing consistent, sustainable and predictable financing and, resources is the fundamental challenge facing the international community and today's Security Council summit meeting. We therefore express our full support for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal to establish a joint African Union-United Nations panel to consider the resources necessary to support the African Union's peacekeeping operations, including funding, logistics and equipment on the ground. The panel should take up the possibility not only of direct financing through the United Nations scale of assessments, but also of establishing a specific fund to that end.

"In expressing our thanks to the Secretary-General for the importance he has attached to resolving African problems and for his relentless efforts to develop cooperation with the African Union, we would stress the need for priority always to be given to the peaceful — and, more specifically, the political — settlement of disputes. Peacekeeping requires that there be a peace to be kept. In that respect, we believe that support for regional peacemaking capabilities must be prioritized, because political settlements are the mother of all solutions to all conflicts.

"Effective cooperation with regional organizations, and the African Union more particularly, requires a reordering of support priorities and a building of capacities that take the following elements into account.

"First, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention must be promoted and strengthened. As we know, those are very important elements that include political, development, humanitarian and social dimensions in which the role of the United Nations and the Security Council dovetails with those of regional and subregional organizations, the States concerned, non-governmental organizations and civil society actors.

"However, any observer of the Security Council's role in that regard will find that the Council's response in taking preventive measures to avert and mitigate the escalation of tensions is far more subdued than the speed with which it dispatches peacekeeping operations, although we know that preventing disputes requires far fewer resources than peacekeeping. We therefore believe that cooperation with the African Union requires, first and foremost, emphasis on preventive diplomacy and the strengthening of the appropriate African Union mechanisms, particularly the regional early warning system, the Panel of the Wise and the African standby force.

"We believe that understanding the true root causes of African disputes will speed the way to their settlement, particularly since the continent's conflicts are rooted in the lack of development, poverty, a shortage of resources, and such natural phenomenon as desertification, drought and numerous climate change phenomena that have sapped our development efforts. All such root causes give rise to internal crises.

"Secondly, as to the building of capacities in mediation and political settlement, we have always believed that the United Nations should take practical and concrete steps to exploit the respective capacities of regional organizations, particularly the AU, in mediation, negotiation and peacemaking through political settlements in order to begin resolving African problems in an African context and enabling regional organizations to achieve peace through financial, moral and political support from the United Nations, including the provision to the AU of all available information on peacemaking.

"Thirdly, with respect to support for regional peacekeeping capacities, I would stress above all the experience of the AU Mission in the Sudan. We believe this to be the ultimate example of the primacy of regional organizations in peacekeeping and their ability to achieve great things despite a lack of resources and capacities.

They fully understand and, indeed, live in close familiarity with the root causes of strife. They also fully understand the values, culture and heritage of local communities. Perhaps the founders of the United Nations, in drafting Chapter VIII of the Charter, grasped the importance of all those dimensions to the international and regional success of regional and subregional peacekeeping efforts. They are the best way to achieve international peace and security.

"The Sudan was therefore most eager to support the African mission, as reflected in the Abuja Agreement. Since July 2004, when it was first dispatched, primarily to monitor the implementation of the ,Ndjamena ceasefire agreement, the mission has experienced the situation on the ground and fully understands it.

"The only way to fully resolve a dispute is politically. It is now up to the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council to convince the rebels to heed reason and not the logic of guns. Effective and constructive negotiations are essential to a permanent and comprehensive settlement in Darfur.

"We wish to address the issue of impunity. Pressure should be brought to bear on the rebel groups living in the territories of our neighbours, and they should be convinced of the need for the option of peace. Amnesty ought not to be granted to those who take advantage of the situation in Darfur to smuggle children out of the country. We should heed the statement made by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the effect that the United Nations should not invest resources in a situation that it does not control. Let us avoid all double standards in international relations. The Sudan has honoured and continues to honour its commitments. Let others do the same.

"Once again, in expressing our appreciation for the wise leadership of South Africa in calling for the convening of this historic meeting, we also express the hope that its results will encourage our peoples' aspirations to stability, peace and security."

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Jorge Urbina, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking you, Sir, as well as Ambassador Kumalo and the delegation of South Africa, for organizing this debate. We welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General and of high representatives of friendly countries. Today's debate is an ideal opportunity to exchange views on our shared responsibility.

International organizations are historical realities; as such, they are changeable instruments. Fortunately, they are better prepared today to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts than they were several decades ago. Unfortunately, however, we are also much more vulnerable to conflict than we were even just a few years ago. Natural and man-made disasters threaten the future of coming generations. There is no doubt that such phenomena as climate change, food crises, water shortages and the large-scale migrations they would entail augur poorly for the future with respect to conflicts. There is also no doubt that Governments' lack of legitimacy, historical resentments and conflicts over natural resources, together with illicit trafficking and terrorism, will fuel new and recurrent conflicts in the future. We in the developing world cannot stop warning that inequality on a global scale and the lack of attention to the extreme poverty that affects one fifth of humanity will also provide fertile ground for the roots of conflict to take hold.

However, we are better prepared than ever before. The international community has continued to advance in the development of new concepts and instruments to deal with conflicts and mitigate their destructive effects.

The concept of the responsibility to protect is a recent development that has turned what was once an absolute right of sovereignty into something much more complex: a right that encompasses the obligation of the State to protect populations on its territory and the subsidiary obligation of the international community to protect those populations when a State is unable to do so.

This contemporary system, which inextricably links the actions of States, international organizations and the international community, unavoidably imposes the concept of shared responsibility in the face of conflict. And facing that shared responsibility, we should ask ourselves how we can work together to prevent conflicts and how we can work together to resolve them once they have begun.

From the perspective of the United Nations, Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) is a real road map by which to approach our responsibilities in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. Furthermore, conflict prevention is the approach that should guide us and towards which we should direct our greatest efforts.

We will be less effective if we face conflicts and their manifestations and forget, as we often do, their root causes. In the words of the Secretary-General, "If we do not deal with the root causes of conflict — and offer sustainable solutions — we will be left with humanitarian emergencies and peacekeeping operations without end" (*S/2008/18, para. 62*).

I would like to underline a fundamental concept in the Secretary-General's comment, when he speaks of the need to offer sustainable solutions. There may be no better moment than this to state that there can be no sustainable peace without sustainable development. Those two concepts are inseparable, and now that our Organization has matured to the point of not limiting its tasks to peacekeeping and of assuming its peacebuilding responsibility, we cannot set aside the sustainability of the solutions we help to build.

However, there will be no sustainable solutions without the legitimacy of Governments and institutions. We understand the concept of cultural diversity and we accept its consequences, but we know very well that where populations do not recognize their Governments as legitimate, there will be no sustainable peace. We also know that where there is no legitimate justice, there can be no sustainable peace either. We know, finally, that attempts to conceal or manipulate the will of the people do not provide a solid basis on which to build a sustainable peace.

For that reason, we are concerned by the current situation in Zimbabwe.

Another concept that Costa Rica would like to emphasize on this important occasion is the shared responsibility of the African Union and the United Nations to build peace on strong foundations of justice. Indeed, we underline the need to prevent conflict by implementing a justice that provides security for the population but that also puts an end to conflict by punishing those guilty of human rights violations and crimes against humanity. We will not be able to prevent or permanently resolve conflict while impunity exists; nor will we be able to build a sustainable peace on a foundation of impunity.

We said before that today we are better prepared to prevent and put an end to conflict. In this context, the contribution of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the civilized world deserves special mention. We welcome the trust that many African States have placed in the Court, and we take this opportunity to call for respect for its authority, particularly in the Sudan, in connection with executing the arrest warrants that have been issued by the ICC.

This meeting should help both organizations to improve the basis of our cooperation. Africa occupies a good part of United Nations peace efforts, even though there are some situations in Africa to which the international community is not properly attending. Here I am referring in particular to Somalia.

In order to build more efficient cooperation towards the attainment of our purposes, it is fundamental to define responsibilities and mandates more clearly. We also need to give regional organizations the means necessary to properly fulfil their responsibilities. We must also strengthen communication between our respective Councils.

All of this seems particularly necessary in the light of the experience, new to all of us, of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the first of its kind. From UNAMID we will certainly learn many lessons towards improving our future cooperation.

Let me conclude by reiterating my country's firm commitment to strengthening the Organization's mechanisms for conflict prevention, which will undoubtedly benefit Africa and the entire developing world. I also reiterate my country's support for the political and military efforts that we undertake to resolve current conflicts and to resolve them in a way that is lasting and sustainable.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias, Permanent Representative of Panama, to take the floor.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to recognize the presence here today of the Secretary-General and of our guests from the African region. Above all, I would like to congratulate you, President Mbeki, and my good friend Ambassador Kumalo for the interest that South Africa has shown in the search for mechanisms to strengthen and render more effective the role of regional organizations and their relationship with the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. This is a good opportunity to recognize in general terms the valuable contribution that regional organizations have made in identifying and resolving the causes of armed conflict, as well as their fundamental importance in conflict prevention and resolution.

Panama reiterates its support for the continued collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union, as a mechanism for preventing and, if necessary, dealing with threats to peace and security in the region. Despite the successes achieved in these efforts, we would like to share our concern about, inter alia, the difficulties encountered in establishing the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the international community's inability to provide the necessary resources to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In the case of Somalia, the African Union has submitted a detailed report on what the forces on the ground require. We regret that, to date, the Security Council has not paid heed to this request. In this context, we must also mention Panama's deep concern about piracy off of the Somali coast, which hampers the vital transport of humanitarian supplies and threatens marine commerce in the Horn of Africa.

My delegation agrees with the recommendations of the Secretary-General to intensify the coordination between the African Union and the United Nations in conflict prevention and to strengthen the African Union's early warning system by, among other strategies, creating an appropriate multi-risk mechanism. Similarly, we need to extend collaboration to other aspects of great strategic importance. It is important, inter alia, to highlight the work undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the establishment of an African standby force that can respond to potentially explosive situations and deter belligerent groups from resorting to arms for resolving conflicts and thus putting civilian lives at risk. Clearly, that requires determination, readiness and capacity on the part of African States.

It is difficult to discuss conflict prevention in Africa without referring to the political crisis in Zimbabwe. Panama highlights the important efforts made by you, Mr. President, and by the South African Development Community in helping to resolve that crisis, respecting the democratic will of the citizens of Zimbabwe and ensuring a legitimate process. However, the actions of the current Government are disturbingly similar to those of autocratic regimes when they refuse to recognize the outcomes of elections and resist giving up power. Ignoring that situation could head us for another disruption in the peace and security in the region.

In addition to conflict prevention, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should seek to protect the civilian population, particularly the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children. That is why we commend the important collaboration among the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the African Union and subregional organizations to build a more effective normative framework for the protection of civilians in Africa. Such a framework should be based on the principles of promotion of and respect for human rights, which are the guiding principles of both OCHA and the AU.

Before concluding, I must point out that the current situation in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is largely the result of close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States in preventing and resolving conflicts. That cooperation is currently reflected in the progress that is being made in Haiti. Nonetheless, the existing regional mechanisms must be constantly evaluated and fine-tuned so that the collaboration between those mechanisms and the United Nations is as effective and efficient as possible.

Finally, Panama reaffirms its commitment to international legality, multilateralism and the principles governing relations between States. We are firmly convinced that it is only through dialogue, understanding and consultation that we can unite forces capable of developing new proposals to resolve the major imbalances and problems suffered by our peoples and regions. Panama reiterates that, if we are to expand the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, we must all become true partners in our plans and, thus, repositories of mutual confidence and respect.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, to take the floor.

Mr. Konaré (Commission of the African Union) (*spoke in French*): I particularly thank you, Mr. President, for your country's leadership and your personal leadership on all African issues. Thank you for having convened this meeting and for dedicating your two presidencies to Africa, in March 2007 and now, by listening to African peoples and African leaders. The problem of financing was raised during our most recent summit and is not a new issue; it was already on the agenda in 1992, when we were establishing the crisis management mechanism.

I should like to attest to the great amount of time that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has devoted to Africa, and to the great interest that he has shown and the listening that he has done in order to be able to assist us. The Secretary-General has demonstrated that through the report that he has submitted to the United Nations and through his proposal that a committee of eminent persons be established so that we can move from discussion to practice. The Secretary-General will also permit me to commend his predecessor, Kofi Annan, who did his utmost for Africa. I should like to thank all our partners present here, from across the spectrum, without whose support the difficulties might have been greater.

You yourself, Mr. President, made an excellent plea to President Kikwete. I cannot add anything to it, because your voice is the most authoritative and legitimate, by virtue not only of your duties, but also of your experience. But I have taken the floor regarding the issue of financing, to say that it does not involve a policy on our part of holding out our hand. We are aware — because I speak on behalf of a responsible Africa — of the efforts that we ourselves must make and of the resources that we ourselves must mobilize. But we are asking this question to clearly indicate Africa's will to make its contribution to peace throughout the world. We are also asking this question to indicate that it is important to have confidence in Africa and in African men and women. We have achieved results in Côte d'Ivoire and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we see what is being done in the Sudan and in Somalia. We must support the interested parties so that they can have more confidence in themselves and in each other, and must not act in their place.

Today, it is certain that resources must be swiftly mobilized to help us put out the fires in Somalia and in Darfur. Of course, there are political problems. Efforts are required from the parties. But we cannot sufficiently stress the fact that, in Somalia and in Darfur, significant resources have been lacking and that, if they had been there in time, we would have been able to do more in the political context.

It is important to build African capacities, because the responsibility is, first and foremost, our own. Building African capacities means consolidating the continental peace and security architecture, strengthening our planning capacities, helping us to swiftly build an early warning system and deploying standby forces. And I would go even further: the standby forces should be able to quickly deploy a standing rapid intervention force. Strengthening the continental peace and security architecture also means refusing to allow lawless zones to exist in Africa. It is not normal that the Somali coasts, despite the presence of significant military bases, are still under the control of pirates today.

I hope that the appeal by the President of Somalia will be heard. To strengthen the continental architecture is to strengthen African capacities. It also means reviewing our relations with all foreign military bases in Africa. I mentioned that last September.

I am pleased that the statement of the President of the French Republic offered perspectives that we should explore together. I am pleased that the authorities of the United States of America came to listen to us regarding the AFRICOM problem and hope that our concerns will be heard, because there is no other policy than to be in harmony with Africa in its will to assume its responsibility for defence and security.

Certainly we should embrace the recommendations of the Secretary-General and establish this panel. Certainly we need to speed up the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, but we must take care that we do not have a thousand restrictive clauses. In order to assist Côte d'Ivoire today, we need considerable means; to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we need considerable means. I am not saying to write a blank check. However, if there are a thousand conditions delaying the implementation of programmes, the countries emerging from conflict or countries that have fragile democratization processes could suffer as a result. Public opinion needs to be informed of what is going to be done and what it has been agreed.

It is important for us to explore and make proper use of everything that Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations offers. Apparently, however, it is insufficient. President Gbagbo mentioned that. In fact, today we need to look at the entire philosophy and culture of the United Nations, which has done what it could. But today the nature of conflicts has changed. Today, nation-States that were the foundations of the United Nations are experiencing much upheaval. Today, beyond intergovernmental cooperation, there are countries that wish to proceed towards shared sovereignty — co-managed sovereignty. It is important that these organizations be able to integrate the United Nations architecture.

It is vital for our roles with the United Nations to be clearly defined. We are not talking about being present and giving to the United Nations and then stepping aside. We need to reflect on a system of co-management, in which, depending on the cases, the roles are defined. We cannot all be parallel; footbridges are needed. We need more coherence among the different representations of the United Nations and even of the United Nations system. It is important, and I wish to commend the Secretary-General, who acknowledged that the leadership of the AU is recognized and significant.

I have spoken at some length about this. I spoke with the Secretary-General yesterday about it; the Minister of Burkina Faso spoke about it; the Secretary of State of France mentioned it as well: the United Nations must act in the case of the current food crisis. The United Nations must act on the current financial crisis. This is a problem of human security. The President of the World Bank, the Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization have made appeals to Governments, but what Government could affirm collective legitimacy more than the Secretary-General of the United Nations, more than the Security Council?

In relation with the Group of 8, in relation with all financial and economic institutions and in relation with regional organizations, we ourselves have launched an appeal to African regional organizations to quickly hold summit meetings, because this crisis is not cyclical, it is structural. It is not a matter of questions and answers for tomorrow. Even for countries that find answers for today, those would be only solitary solutions that could not last.

The four months to come, April to July, is the period of making ends meet in many countries. Prices will go up. If we are unlucky and the rainy season is not good, we could be looking at a most serious catastrophe. This morning we call on the Security Council. The Secretary-General must have all political means. Less than one month ago we held a high-level meeting to talk about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But there will be no MDGs if we do not manage over this difficult period.

This is an urgent appeal requiring an urgent response. It cannot await the G8 summit in July. Legitimacy is in this House and must grapple with the problems of security, which include more than simply conflicts. Poverty and hunger kill as well. They will bring unexpected instability if we are not careful.

I would like assure the Secretary-General of the support of the new Chairman of the Commission, Jean Ping, of his determination to continue this work. He has been to this House; he knows it well. There is no doubt that he will be at the side of the Secretary-General in the name of Africa.

For my part, I can give you, Sir, the pledge that in my new functions, this commitment will be an ongoing one. These functions and responsibilities, new for me, are also my responsibilities as the former President of Mali and today as the former Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, because on 30 April at the latest the new President will take on those functions.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5868 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5868th meeting

Wednesday, 16 April 2008, 3 p.m.
New York *

President:	Ms. Dlamini-Zuma/Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Chevalier
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Bassole
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Wirajuda
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 8 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/229)

Report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa (S/2008/18)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers, as indicated this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, Former Prime Minister and Personal Representative of the President of Algeria, to take the floor.

Mr. Ouyahia (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, has asked me to convey to the Security Council his deep regret at not being able to be here in person to attend this important meeting due to an especially busy national agenda. He has also asked me to convey to the Council his best wishes for the success of this meeting between the African Union and the United Nations. He has also given me the honour of reading out to the Council the following message on this occasion.

> "I wish at the outset to thank the President of the Security Council for having taken the initiative to organize a high-level Security Council debate on strengthening partnership between the Security Council and regional organizations, particularly the African Union through its Peace and Security Council. It has indeed become urgent to improve the capacities and to strengthen the action of regional organizations, especially the African Union, in the critical area of maintaining peace and security.
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> "For the African continent, seeking and maintaining peace and security represents a major challenge as significant as the issue of development. In that respect, we note with pleasure the decrease in recent years of the number of conflicts and crisis situations on the continent, as well as the undeniable progress that has been made in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That trend should strengthen and grow thanks to Africa's collective commitment to peace, embodied in the actions of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. It should also be encouraged and robustly supported entire international community.
>
> "At the tenth summit of the African that took place in Addis Ababa in Janua Secretary-General stressed the importa tightening cooperation links between the Union and the United Nations. He poin that it was vital to enhance that partner order to overcome the obstacles to pea security on the continent. I welcome th quality of cooperation between the Nations and the African Union and the that has been achieved in that area.
>
> "In the framework of that coopera transfer of authority took place late last ye the African Union Mission in Sudan African Union-United Nations Hybrid Op in Darfur. That major development was ba a dynamic balance between imperative p considerations and unavoidable operation logistical requirements. Elsewhere, the Nations has supported such African coun Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau the programme of work of the Peaceb Commission. In January 2007, two of countries benefited from the Peacebuilding Unfortunately, the allocated budgetary en has not been fully disbursed.
>
> "With respect to issues of peac security, the situation in Africa has characterized by emergences from crises perpetuation of conflicts that we had hope resolved, first, by the mobilization of A themselves, and later by that of the intern community. That is the case with the W Sahara, where the United Nations Mission Referendum in Western Sahara has been de for more than 15 years. It is also the ca Somalia, where the African Union Miss clearly been unable to provide the con necessary for resolving the security, pol humanitarian aspects of the situation.
>
> "The implementation of a peac security architecture of the African Un including a mechanism for the pre management and settlement of conflic Peace and Security Council and a cou elders — reflects Africa's resolve

responsibility for itself and to act in favour of political solutions that integrate the values of conciliation and reconciliation and ensure the sustainability of agreements reached.

"I hope that this high-level Security Council debate will represent a decisive step towards strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. Such cooperation, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, could give rise to innovative modes of operation. In that respect, it would be extremely useful for us to adopt a more ambitious interpretation of Chapter VIII of the Charter, which is the legal basis for peacekeeping operations led by regional organizations. Such an interpretation could take account of local realities and favour responses adapted to specific contexts and characteristics, with a clear view of each party's respective responsibilities and complementarities.

"It is indeed important that the as yet unexploited potential for synergy, interaction and coordination of cooperation between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations be fully achieved. There is no doubt whatsoever that a successful synthesis of regional and subregional efforts with the activities of the international community will allow us to mobilize all the energy necessary to achieving goals that serve the cause of peace.

"In that context, as soon as it is approved by the Security Council, a peacekeeping operation on the African continent should be treated in the same way as operations led by the United Nations, particularly in terms of the management and disbursement of funding, which should be adequate and regular. The time has come to institutionalize funding and to move beyond the ad hoc approach of some financing that makes it difficult to plan and manage such missions.

"If we are to lay such uncertainties to rest once and for all, we should consider funding mechanisms that are more consistent and better coordinated. In that respect, the path laid out in January 2007 by the heads of State of the African Union — which consists of organizing missions that are led by the Union, agreed with the Security Council, and funded by assessed contributions of United Nations Member States in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter — should be endorsed and implemented as soon as possible. Such an approach would allow us sustainably to overcome the significant funding constraints facing Africa. It would help to enhance the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations and to reassert the authority and credibility of the Security Council in its supervision of regional initiatives, which would then be undertaken with clear objectives, effectively and in the certainty that funds would be put to best use, to the satisfaction of the international community as a whole."

Having read out President Bouteflika's message, I should like very briefly to add two comments on behalf of the delegation of Algeria.

First, we support the statement made by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, the current Chairman of the African Union, and endorse the proposal he made on behalf of Africa.

Secondly, Algeria pays homage to the personal efforts of President Mbeki to convene this meeting and to draw up the draft resolution that has been submitted to the Security Council. Such a commitment on his part is a tribute to his country, South Africa. It does honour to Africa. On behalf of President Bouteflika, we thank him very warmly.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Laure Olga Gondjout, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Francophonie and Regional Integration of Gabon.

Mrs. Gondjout (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, whom I have the honour to represent here, I would like to say how pleased our delegation and I myself are to see Mr. Mbeki presiding over this high-level meeting on the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

As the Council knows, the President of the Gabonese Republic is very interested in questions related to international peace and security, particularly in Africa. He thus fully supports the initiative that the Council presidency has taken to organize this meeting to examine questions related to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council can be assured of his solidarity with the resulting recommendations.

The report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186) has proposed interesting paths for reflection on strengthening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

While today we have reasons to be pleased with developments in recent years in this area, particularly in Africa, we must acknowledge that a great deal remains to be done so that this cooperation can have more solid content. With a constant and significant contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations and to our own, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, Africa has shown its will and capacity to mobilize for the resolution of conflicts and crises that threaten collective security. That is the case with the African peacekeeping mission in Burundi, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the recent African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The President of the Gabonese Republic, in consultation with his peers in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), is contributing to the search for solutions to the crises in the subregion. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Situation in the Central African Republic, he encourages consultations and inclusive dialogue to reach political and economic stabilization of that country.

The President of the Gabonese Republic has also been active in the deployment of the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (FOMUC). The same is true of the case of Chad, where Gabon is working for an inclusive dialogue between the various stakeholders.

Gabon is also in the contact group to follow up the Dakar agreement signed on 13 March 2008 between Chad and the Sudan at the initiative of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. The group held its the first meeting of Foreign Ministers in Libreville on 10 April 2008. Another meeting of the contact group, this time at the level of experts on defence, security and intelligence, will be held in Tripoli, Libya at the end of this month to consider and plan for the rapid establishment, with the support of the United Nations and the European Union, of a surveillance force at the border between Chad and the Sudan.

Unfortunately, all of these African initiatives come up against the insufficiency of resources, in particular with regard to financing, human and institutional capacity-building and peacebuilding. Because of this, my country supports the Secretary-General's proposal to quickly create a panel of eminent experts for an in-depth consideration of predictable and stable financing of peacekeeping operations initiated by regional organizations.

Capacity-building in preventive diplomacy is another area of concern, which was addressed in resolution 1625 (2005) of 14 September 2005. From that perspective, joint mediation and good offices missions could help defuse the brewing conflicts and crises.

On a completely different topic, Gabon would like to launch a strong appeal to the international community for assistance to developing countries facing increases in food prices, which could produce socio-economic troubles likely to degenerate into lasting crises.

I express the wish that the resolution to be adopted at the end of this debate will strengthen the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the African Union in particular, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura.

Mrs. Bangura (Sierra Leone): At the outset, I would like to convey the sincere appreciation of His Excellency Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, for the invitation extended to him to participate in this debate. While also congratulating President Thabo Mbeki on conceiving this laudable initiative, allow me to convey President Koroma's profound regret for his inability to be personally present to contribute to this all-important subject, due to compelling preoccupations at home.

My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report to the Security Council on this subject (S/2008/186) and the recommendations therein.

The remarkable talent and ability of President Mbeki, coupled with his consummate experience, convince us that we can exude pride and confidence that his special talents can be brought to bear on the proceedings of this meeting.

Partnership and cooperation provide the opportunity to tap into the comparative advantages of the United Nations and regional stakeholders to respectively contribute to addressing threats to international peace and security. Thus a concerted effort in managing, resolving and preventing conflicts constitutes a vital ingredient for international peace, security and prosperity.

As a nation that has emerged from a protracted conflict and that is still grappling with the effects of that menace, Sierra Leone is a living testimony to the critical importance of a regional approach to conflict resolution and prevention. The historic decision by Security Council in resolution 1181 (1998), in welcoming and recognizing the important contribution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in support of Sierra Leone Government's efforts to re-establish effective administration and the democratic process and to embark on the task of national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation, is a clear demonstration of the imperative of these partnerships.

With two thirds of the world's poorest countries, Africa has experienced a myriad of civil conflicts that resulted in abject poverty and socio-economic exclusion. Efforts by the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS in establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution — particularly the crisis situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and the Darfur region in the Sudan — clearly demonstrate the willingness and commitment of the continent to take on its responsibility for peace, security and stability in the continent.

Despite positive trends and advances with regard to obtaining durable peace in Africa, the conditions required for sustainable development have yet to be consolidated throughout the continent. Thus, these efforts can yield dividends only through the cooperation and support of the international community, based on the principle of mutual respect and trust. There is therefore an urgent need to intensify and harmonize national, regional and international efforts in order to develop African human and institutional capacities, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

The need to support those countries in getting back on their feet is more than imperative, and it involves peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy. We know only too well the challenges faced by post-conflict countries after years of civil strife. Such countries, often fragile and reeling under the weight of poverty, are usually not equal to the Herculean task of rebuilding what has been scarred by years of devastation. Supporting those countries in order to heal the wounds of conflict is, in itself, an antidote that could stabilize them as well as prevent them from sliding down the thorny path that leads to renewed conflict.

It is in that light that we applaud and greatly appreciate the efforts and engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission regarding countries like ours, grappling with post-conflict reconstruction. We trust that the call for close collaboration between the Peacebuilding Commission and the AU Standing Multidimensional Committee could be strengthened through regular consultation and coordination. The abundant resources that we muster for intervention and peacekeeping operations could be significantly reduced if we heavily invest in preventive diplomacy, by tackling the root causes of conflicts upstream. Thus, a stitch in time saves nine.

In order to accomplish that goal, the United Nations system should adapt itself to the transformations and developments that the continent is currently experiencing, particularly in the context of the evolving structures and programmes of the AU. In the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the AU and subregional organizations have devised mechanisms to strengthen their peacekeeping capacity and to take the lead in peacekeeping operations on the continent. Those ongoing efforts require close collaboration and coordination between the United Nations and the AU.

In concluding, I wish to emphasize that, in the promotion of international peace and security, the real challenge lies in strengthening partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. That also calls for implementation of the relevant mandates of the General Assembly and the Security Council and highlights the need for the United Nations and the international community to provide further support to the AU in the following ways.

First, the AU Peace Fund should be replenished, and flexible, predictable and sustainable financing should be ensured for AU peacekeeping operations so that they can expedite or step up troop deployment in peacekeeping operations. Secondly, the initiatives of the African Union and subregional organizations to prevent, mediate and resolve conflicts with the assistance of the United Nations should be encouraged and supported. Thirdly, cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) should be strengthened by providing coherent support for its programmes through the mobilization of internal and external financial resources. Fourthly, the individual and collective efforts of African countries should be supplemented so that agricultural productivity can be increased in a sustainable way, in order to ensure food security in the context of NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. Finally, a well-structured multi-stakeholder post-conflict peacebuilding programme that has clearly defined and coordinated roles for each partner should be established.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Majozi Sithole, Minister of Finance of Swaziland, to take the floor.

Mr. Sithole (Swaziland): I wish at the outset to join all those who have spoken before me in congratulating South Africa on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I also wish to commend the initiative that your delegation has taken, Madam President, in convening this very historic meeting. We fully support you in this initiative.

The Swaziland delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186).

The preparation of the report signifies the importance of the subject matter. Over the past few years, experience has shown that regional organizations play a significant role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The importance of that role emanates from the fact that regional organizations have a comparative advantage over the Security Council when it comes to understanding the nature of the conflicts obtaining in a particular region, by reason of proximity. Even the Charter of the United Nations recognizes the importance of regional organizations, in its Chapter VIII.

While it is recognized that it is the primary responsibility of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security, the Council cannot carry out that mandate in isolation. That highlights the importance of the need to strengthen and deepen the relations between the United Nations and regional organizations in order to effectively maintain international peace and security.

Close collaboration between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council can significantly improve the handling of the conflict situations in Africa. The challenges faced by the African Union in its efforts aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution are daunting. All too often, the African Union has had to initiate its own missions in conflict areas because the United Nations has not been able to deploy peacekeeping missions there. Even after peacekeeping operations have been authorized by the Security Council, the United Nations has been slow in operationalizing such missions.

The frustration experienced by the African Union emanates mainly from a lack of the resources it requires to operationalize its initiatives. It is therefore imperative to establish a mechanism that would provide funding in a predictable, flexible and sustainable manner for the long-term planning of peacekeeping missions. In that regard, we welcome the timely proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General that a high-level panel be established to study the funding situation and to come up with modalities for how it should be done.

Swaziland wishes to align itself with the statement of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, which we fully support. We urge that the exercise by the high-level panel be conducted expeditiously. We believe that it would not be an academic exercise, because we are talking about human lives here. We also welcome the progress made in the operationalization of the peace architecture of the African Union. We look forward to the continued support of the international community in that regard.

The importance of strengthening relations between the United Nations and the African Union cannot be overemphasized. Let us look forward to its success.

Finally, I wish to join colleagues who have spoken before me in saying the following. Let us keep our eyes on the problems that we are currently facing. The food prices that continue to escalate every day have the potential to cause problems and uprisings in our countries.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Dieudonné Kombo Yaya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, to take the floor.

Mr. Kombo Yaya (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Permit me to convey to you, Madam President, the regrets of His Excellency Mr. François Bozizé, President of the Republic and Head of State, who, because of other commitments, could not personally take part in this meeting on cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. He remains convinced that, under your country's presidency, the Security Council will further strengthen its cooperation with the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The African architecture in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution is the outcome of the commitment of our heads of State or Government, first within the former Organization of African Unity and then within today's African Union (AU), to ensure that peace and security — which are, moreover, inseparable — are the top priority, because without peace there can be no economic and social development. The relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Constitutive Act of the African Union emphasize that point quite clearly.

We welcome the active cooperation between our two organizations in the area of peacekeeping. There are many examples in that regard. I need not refer to them in detail, as most of those who have spoken before me have eloquently cited numerous examples of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. However, I would like to emphasize in particular the need to strengthen the capacity of subregional organizations with conflict settlement mechanisms, such as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. Such bodies work at the grass-roots level, play a basic and crucial role in the settlement of conflicts and should rely on the African Union only as a last resort. We therefore welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General for the establishment of a joint United Nations-African Union group of experts to consider in detail how to support the peacekeeping operations of subregional organizations, especially in terms of funding.

I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my President, to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his support for the establishment of a regional office for the Great Lakes region of Central Africa.

In the light of the new situation, enhancing the capacity of the African Union also continues to be a priority. As you are aware, Madam President, the Central African Republic is a post-conflict country that is trying to emerge from two decades of ongoing crisis. Any effort aimed at re-establishing and strengthening peace should take into account the economic situation in the country, because extreme poverty, hunger and the precarious state of our people's health constitute fertile ground for instability.

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the joint efforts made by the African Union through the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, including the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Chairman of the African Union, in order to bring about reconciliation in Central Africa, including the work done to prepare for the inclusive dialogue, which came to an end on 31 March and which will open up the way for the dialogue to take place very soon.

In conclusion, we fully support the draft resolution put forward by your country, Madam President, which opens up new horizons for our continent.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Envoy of the President of Nigeria, to take the floor.

Mr. Maduekwe (Nigeria): On behalf of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, may I commend South Africa's initiative in bringing this crucial subject before the Security Council. By the same token, I commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his comprehensive report on the issue. The report is pertinent not only in terms of its proposals for prospective cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), but also in proffering targeted recommendations to improve that partnership. We are pleased with the effort of the Secretary-General and agree with his viewpoint that there are outstanding questions about the nature of the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, including the AU, that need to be clarified.

African problems are truly global problems, in ways that grim statistics render more disturbingly challenging than the current pace of global response would suggest, especially in the area of funding, despite the untiring best efforts of the Secretary-General. Nigeria therefore fully endorses this debate, as it affords us an opportunity to redefine and realign the major strands of the evolving strategic partnership between the AU and the United Nations. Indeed, the foundations of the functional relationship we seek between the United Nations and the AU are rooted in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. In a global village, one cannot afford unsafe compounds; it is too close for comfort.

Regional organizations like the AU are uniquely placed to tackle threats to regional peace and security. Nigeria recognizes the efficacy of complementarities and partnerships in that regard. That is part of the reason that we have been steadfast in our commitment to the United Nations, the AU and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States.

We believe that this debate, which comes at a time of reduced shooting wars in Africa, serves to energize a momentum which we should build upon. On its part, the African Union has sufficiently demonstrated political will for the peaceful resolution of the continent's problems. What is now required is for the international community to put its money where its mouth is.

I would like to conclude by calling for very close cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in drafting a resolution that will not only meet the challenges of today but address our dreams for tomorrow, namely, that of a more peaceful world underpinned by an ever-closer partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. I am confident that we can achieve that objective. But that will be difficult if the United Nations continues to ignore the wisdom of the African proverb that says that you do not shave a man's head in his absence. If close to 60 per cent of the Security Council's time is devoted to African issues, and Africa is the only continent not represented on the Security Council in the permanent category, how can the United Nations make progress on the issue of African ownership of its own problems and solutions without addressing that imbalance?

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ronnie Shikapwasha, Minister for Home Affairs and Special Envoy of Zambia, to take the floor.

Mr. Shikapwasha (Zambia): First of all, I would like to commend South Africa for its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, which comes at a momentous period in the affairs of the African continent.

With regard to peace and security on the continent, Africa continues to grapple with intractable peace and security situations in many parts of the continent. South Africa's presidency is therefore a further confirmation of the confidence of the international community in the leadership and role that South Africa continues to play in the various conflicts and their resolution. South Africa's role has in many ways enhanced Africa's initiatives in the resolution of some of Africa's long-standing conflicts. In that regard, the convening of this meeting is relevant in our attempt to find solutions to Africa's raging conflicts. This meeting also comes at a time when the international community is seeking to partner with the African Union to find solutions to Africa's flashpoints. Finally, South Africa's presidency also comes at a time when the world is looking to the continent to assume greater responsibility for its own human condition arising from conflict situations.

While we recognize the centrality of the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security, the evolution of conflicts and their management has thrust new responsibilities on the African continent, and indeed the African Union (AU). Africa's willingness to find solutions to some of the hard conflicts has increased Africa's role in the finding of solutions to those conflicts on behalf of the international community, especially the Security Council.

Africa continues to suffer from a lack of resources and capacity to secure lasting solutions to the continent's conflicts. There is a need, therefore, to develop and work on mechanisms with the United Nations system to enhance the provision of predictable and sustainable resources to Africa's efforts in finding solutions to its conflicts. The United Nations efforts in that respect should include the funding of peace operations, especially that related to start-up financing for equipment and logistics.

Zambia supports in that regard the amendment of United Nations rules on peacekeeping budgets to finance regional operations authorized by the Security Council. As regards the deployment and management of African Union-led peace support operations, Zambia recommends for consideration at this meeting that such operations be funded through United Nations assessed contributions. Considering the importance of resources to the success of AU missions — and indeed, to those of the United Nations — it is proposed that an in-depth analysis of the current financial outlays to peace missions also be made.

While financial resources are cardinal to positive outcomes in conflict zones, Zambia would support cooperative mechanisms that ensure human dignity based on the development of coherent strategies and policies that would protect civilians in armed conflicts. Zambia would, in that respect, support early warning systems that anticipate human-made social, political and economic upheavals which are the precursors of Africa's conflicts.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal.

Mr. Gadio (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of President Abdoulaye Wade of the Republic of Senegal, whom it is my honour to represent, I should like at the outset warmly to congratulate South Africa and President Thabo Mbeki on having again this year convened an open Security Council debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security. I should also like to commend the leadership of President Kikwete of Tanzania, the acting Chairman of the African Union.

The interest that all Member States have shown in today's debate is justified by the complex nature of conflict situations in Africa and throughout the world. That complexity requires synergy and dynamic interaction between the United Nations, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and regional organizations, which are a complementary tool to the activities of the Organization. In that respect, Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter clearly sets out the modalities for cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations.

In that regard, we should welcome the high quality of the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. That partnership is all the more necessary given that Africa contributes almost 35 per cent of contingents and hosts almost half of all peacekeeping operations, including the largest and most complex. In that respect, at their 2006 summit, the heads of State and Government of the African Union called on the United Nations to consider, within the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter, the possibility of funding, through contributions by its Member States, peacekeeping operations deployed by the African Union or under its authority, with the consent of the United Nations.

That invitation demonstrates the resolve of African leaders to take responsibility for conflicts as soon as they break out and to intervene relatively quickly when the United Nations cannot do so. The case of Darfur is a perfect illustration of that approach. However, as all are aware, Africa does not always have the necessary resources to assume such a burden, nor does it always remain concretely engaged by providing, quantitatively and qualitatively, the forces necessary to the success of its interventions. The case of Darfur also raises the issue of striking a balance between the urgent need to act to stop atrocities and due respect for the initiatives of such regional organizations as the African Union.

African solutions for African problems represent a noble and praiseworthy approach, but they should not add to the unbearable suffering of the victims of conflicts in Africa. In the face of the urgency that has been recognized by the United Nations and the African Union, action needs to be taken immediately.

The delicate issue of funding arose during the operations in the three African missions in Burundi, Somalia and Darfur. It should be considered in depth so that we can find a solution. Any solution should, however, take equal account of the start-up phase of missions and their long-term viability.

There is a similar concern with regard to implementing the key provision of the Dakar Accord between Chad and the Sudan concerning the peace and security force to monitor the long common border between those brotherly countries. The Dakar Accord — concluded on 13 March 2008 in the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the African Union Commission, and with the strong support of the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and all the States of the Islamic ummah — needs important logistic and financial resources if it is to be successful. Senegal therefore strongly supports the proposal contained in paragraph 76 of the Secretary-General's report of 7 April 2008 on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The greatest attention should be given to strengthening African peacekeeping capacities, particularly in terms of planning and managing training operations for civilian, military and police personnel, as well as logistical support. Regional organizations, in particular the African Union, should have the ability to be more alert to potential conflicts so as to be able to avert them and to take all necessary measures, in close collaboration with the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council.

We need to make better use of preventive diplomacy and strategic anticipation if we are to be able to fulfil our commitments. The entire world is listening to the African continent today, as for instance with regard to the electoral processes in Zimbabwe and, earlier, in Kenya. Unfortunately, we Africans have answered only with a deafening silence that can be heard everywhere. In establishing its council of elders, the African Union has understood and recognized that conflicts, be they dormant or active, can be resolved only by political means — in other words, negotiation, early warning and good offices.

In closing, I would insist on the need for the international community to take urgent measures to address the humanitarian crises sorely afflicting many States in Africa and throughout the world, as reflected in the brilliant plea made this morning by the leaders of the African Union Commission.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Rosemary Museminali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda.

Ms. Museminali (Rwanda): The Rwandan delegation applauds the initiative of President Mbeki of South Africa to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), in the maintenance of peace and international security. More particularly, it could not have come at a more appropriate time than at this moment, when people all over the world are remembering the over 1 million Rwandans who lost their lives 14 years ago in circumstances that could have been prevented or halted later on. This forum thus offers us an opportunity to review mechanisms by which we can prevent and effectively intervene in future conflicts in Africa and other parts of the world with greater coherence and effectiveness.

What we need to do is direct our efforts towards creating a mechanism that will address effective and efficient coordination of both organizations in order to deliver peace and security where it is needed most: in conflict areas. AU member countries have taken up their responsibility. They have shown goodwill and a readiness and willingness to actively engage in peacekeeping and security maintenance, mainly on the African continent but also in other parts of the world. What we expect from the Security Council, which is mandated by the Charter to maintain international peace and security, is the realistic, timely and predictable provision of adequate resources to accomplish those missions. Timely intervention has been hampered by the inefficient provision of resources, which in turn leads to missions being ineffective.

AU member countries are capable of raising sizable numbers of professional military and police personnel for peacekeeping, but they are still largely incapable of properly equipping them. The United Nations therefore needs to agree to effectively maintain its central role of sustaining peacekeeping forces in conflict areas by equipping them effectively and by making available the logistical support they need to perform their duties.

In our view, this meeting offers us an opportunity to forge a greater mutual partnership to address regional conflicts by putting in place a joint team from both organizations to work together to deal with practical issues that have hampered our effectiveness in the past. We are grateful that this has been provided for in the draft resolution before the Council.

Greater participation by regional organizations in conflict resolution needs to be tapped more and more, given the fact that those regional organizations have greater proximity to conflict areas and a better appreciation of the political and cultural issues. Therefore, it is urgent to institutionalize relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, in the areas of conflict resolution and peacekeeping by building the AU's capacity to implement initiatives that are in fact possible but that seem impossible at current resource levels.

My delegation therefore wishes to propose, inter alia, the following measures, some of which have already been mentioned by other delegations. We wish also to support all the proposals set out in the draft resolution before the Council. These measures include the following.

First, AU peace and security measures taken to resolve conflicts should be considered pivotal and should be reinforced and supported by the Security Council.

Secondly, we feel that the United Nations should work on more predictable ways to fund peacekeeping operations. More reliable funding should be considered through assessed contributions by Member States, because we find that these resources are more predictable and therefore facilitate better planning and contribute to greater efficiency. Current fundraising measures need to be reviewed.

Thirdly, as most African nations willing to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations do not have the matching resources, we feel that, whenever regional organizations undertake peace and security roles, the United Nations should work out ways to immediately prepare light and heavy support packages to ease the transition from operations by regional organizations to United Nations operations, in order to avoid the costly delays that have plagued some of the missions in the region, such as those in Somalia and Darfur. Consider how much the former African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) — the current African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) — would have been able to achieve with better mobility, better logistics and well-paid, well-fed forces provided with proper health care.

Rwanda is happy to contribute to the promotion of international peace and security through its military and police contributions to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions in the Sudan, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Comoros and Haiti. We are committed to continuing these contributions for as long as they are required, and as our meagre financial resources permit.

We are committed to this quest for a working partnership to spread peace because, more than anybody else, we have tasted the lack of peace and security, and we know what the lack of peace means for a country and a region. The failure to address the threat posed by genocidal forces such as the members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces and Interahamwe, also known as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, has perpetuated conflict in the Great Lakes region. My delegation therefore welcomes the recent adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1804 (2008), which aims to address the threat posed by those forces not only to Rwanda but also to the entire Great Lakes region. Any delay in the response to this threat undermines us all. It allows the international supporters of those forces to increase their activities of destabilization, which are manifested in the current blatant activities and international conferences aimed at genocide denial. Genocide denial, as a last stage of the implementation of the genocidal ideology, is a formidable threat to peace and security, as it energizes perpetration.

We all need to watch out for masked political manoeuvres aimed at undermining peace and stability. This poses a serious threat to peace and security, and we urge the Security Council and regional organizations to discourage and deal with the threat. Today in Rwanda we face a situation where, ironically, those who stopped the 1994 genocide are being labelled as perpetrators by those seeking to manipulate the international system; these allegations are based on misinformation provided by perpetrators still at large or by their sympathizers.

Our painful experience in Rwanda taught us that peace comes at a huge price. There can be no peace without reconciliation and without recognition of the rights and interests of all people, including the right of States to exist and the right of self-determination. We have learned that no community's rights can or should supersede another's. We have learned the value of sharing, the value of communities finding and consciously forging ways to promote living side by side in peace and mutual respect. It is these initiatives that this joint meeting needs to recognize; it needs to enhance mechanisms to help nurture and enhance long-lasting peace and stability.

In conclusion, I express the hope that the outcome of this meeting will be a firm and clear mechanism to strengthen the mechanisms for institutionalizing relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, in the crucial areas of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Once again, an opportunity is before us to translate our many challenges and opportunities into a shared destiny of peace, security and prosperity for all.

The President: I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, His Excellency Mr. João Bernando de Miranda, to take the floor.

Mr. Miranda (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): I would like to start by conveying our appreciation to the President for holding this high-level meeting on peace and security in Africa. I am greatly honoured to participate in this forum on behalf of the President of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, who for unavoidable reasons could not travel to New York.

Allow me to congratulate the President, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, for the wise manner in which he has been conducting the work of the Security Council, especially for the opportunity and pertinence of including in its agenda an issue that is vital to its good performance, and that is matters related to peace and security in Africa. I would also like to express my appreciation to the previous Council President for the constructive manner in which he, together with the Secretary-General, contributed to the realization of this important high-level meeting, which takes place at a juncture when both the United Nations and the African Union (AU) are confronting multiple and complex challenges linked to peace and development in the African continent.

On the occasion of the 2007 Security Council meeting on the same topic, under the French presidency (*5749th meeting*), the Council recognized, among other aspects, the fundamental role of regional and subregional organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts on the basis Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, as well as of Council resolutions 1625 (2005) and 1631 (2005), to which we can add presidential statement 2005/39. The Council reiterated the importance of the relevant paragraphs of the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit, General Assembly resolution 60/1, on the need for development aid for Africa and strengthening the African Union's operational capacity for peacekeeping operations for a 10-year period.

Africa is aware that the principal causes for the conflicts in the continent have a direct relationship with circumstances resulting from the complexity of its ethnic and linguistic phenomena. However, they are also fundamentally linked to the underdevelopment that is a consequence of the undeniable legacy of a long period of colonization that dramatically marked the course of its history. It is in that context that the AU, along with subregional economic communities, has been deeply engaged in the operationalization of its peace and security structures and mechanisms, namely the African Standby Force, the early warning system, the Panel of the Wise and the Special Fund for peace and security.

We understand that in order for the United Nations and the AU to be able to adequately counter the constraints on the efficiency of the necessary cooperation in the domain of conflict prevention, management and resolution, it is of the utmost necessity to address the issues of peace and security in an inclusive manner, not dissociating them from development problems. The convergence of those elements is fundamental for the success of peacekeeping operations. That is one of the lessons we learned while following and observing certain conflict resolution, peace consolidation and economic reconstruction processes as the first Chairman of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, in 2006 and 2007.

As we have already mentioned, peace and social development are correlated elements that complement one another. Having achieved peace, the Republic of Angola has been undertaking enormous efforts to create subjective and material conditions for its reconstruction, with a view to reaching sustained development. The accomplishments of my Government have deserved the recognition of all the Angolan society and the international community, in light of the tangible results already reached in the recovery of the economic and social infrastructure destroyed during the war and in the construction of new infrastructure. Judging from the positive trend in our economic growth, which is above of 19 per cent, our perspectives are, frankly, encouraging.

It is in this perspective that the Angolan Government conceived and is implementing the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction in order to reach the human development indicators set out in the Millennium Declaration. Our experience has demonstrated that in the African context, the consolidation of peace results from the combination of various factors such as the conception and implementation of a coherent policy of national reconciliation, the implementation of economic reforms that favour the provision of ample space for free initiative on the part of national and foreign citizens, the constant reinforcement of State authority as an imperative for the consolidation of democratic institutions, and respect for and safeguarding of human rights as a component of peace, democracy and development, among others.

Indeed, under the able leadership of the President of the Republic, José Eduardo dos Santos, Angola has been removing the hurdles that hindered the smile of its people. Today, only six years after the end of the internal conflict that lacerated the country for several decades, peace and national reconciliation are consolidated, and with them democracy, whose consecration will be strengthened with the holding, for the second time in the history of Angola, of the legislative and presidential elections foreseen for 2008 and 2009, respectively.

The Republic of Angola reiterates, therefore, its firm commitment to working in a self-sacrificing and altruistic manner in the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and in the subregional organizations of which it is a member, towards helping to find peaceful solutions for the conflicts that still persist in certain countries of our continent. To that effect, my Government considers the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations to be of extreme importance.

I would like to state that my delegation will support the deliberative text that will result from our debate.

The President: I now invite the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the President of Egypt, Mr. Ibrahim Ali Hassan, to take the floor.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to convey the greetings of His Excellency President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak and his wishes for the full success of this summit. We would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency President Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, for his constructive initiative in calling for this important meeting at this high level to discuss one of the most important issues of concern for Africa and the world.

I am confident we all agree on the high priority that the issue of peace and security represents on the international list of concerns and on the agenda for African collective action. This matter was clearly reflected in devising the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) in 2001 and earlier in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, in 1963. The issue of peace and security in the African continent also comes at the forefront in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) document, which considered it a necessary precondition for achieving comprehensive development in the continent, hence emphasizing the firm correlation between the promotion of peace and security on the one side and the efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals on the other.

In this context, the African Union has been keen on establishing institutions and mechanisms that are capable of dealing, both seriously and effectively, with conflict situations in Africa. Efforts have not been confined only to the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which plays a crucial role in promoting security, stability and in dispute settlement in the continent; they also extend to the establishment of the African Standby Force, the Panel of the Wise, a Peace Fund and a continental early warning system, along with a comprehensive political framework for reconstruction and rehabilitation in countries emerging from conflict. That rendered the AU highly capable of taking rapid and effective actions to contain existing conflicts and avert the emergence of new ones. As a result, many conflicts were resolved within the past few years, bringing the number down from 12 at the beginning of this century to a limited number, for which efforts are under way to find peaceful settlements.

The NEPAD initiative was launched in tandem with the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism in order to consolidate the pillars of good economic and political governance, in fulfilment of the aspirations of the peoples of the continent for a promising future based on solidarity and integration and arising from the principle of African national ownership, stressing that the future of Africa will be built by the Africans themselves.

Despite the numerous developments and the continuing changes on the regional and international scenes — which all reaffirm the need for further cooperation and consultation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council — we still lack the institutional mechanism needed to consolidate such cooperation in a specific framework that commits to the historical, cultural and developmental particularities of the African States. Such a framework must take into consideration the delicate balance agreed upon in the 2005 United Nations Summit between the issues of peace and security, economic and social development and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the African citizen.

At an early stage Egypt discerned the dire need to bolster the cooperation between the United Nations and the AU. To that end, Egypt proposed, during its presidency of the African Union Peace and Security Council in December 2006, its well-known initiative to establish a Coordination and Consultation Mechanism between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the warm welcome and interest with which the Egyptian initiative was received and for the progress achieved in its invigoration through joint sessions of the two organs.

Furthermore, Egypt emphasizes the need to promote cooperation and consultation between the peace and security structures on both sides through exchanging information and reports between the two Councils, dispatching fact-finding missions or conducting joint missions. In addition, there is a need to speedily adopt the appropriate norms and to agree on the necessary conditions by which to consider African peacekeeping missions as United Nations missions and to provide the necessary funding. Such coordination should also expand to include the various African subregional arrangements, as they play a vital role in dispute settlement and maintaining peace and security in the continent through their active regional mechanisms.

Moreover, there is a much-needed constructive cooperation between the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Conference in maintaining international peace and security. We wish to highlight in this respect the ongoing cooperation between the AU and the subregional economic groups and the increasing coordination between the AU and the League of Arab States to achieve security and stability in Africa and to contribute jointly to the settlement of existing conflicts in a number of African States, such as the Sudan, Somalia and the Comoros, etc. We salute the summit decisions on both sides, as they reveal how highly they value the cooperation between them, and underscore the need to carry on their efforts to reinforce peace and security in Africa.

In the light of its responsibilities towards the AU and the United Nations, Egypt has steadily been keen on actively participating in peacekeeping operations, most recently through its broad participation in the Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Within the framework of capacity-building in preventive diplomacy, it has established the regional Cairo Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa, which since 1995 has been organizing regular training courses for African diplomatic and military cadres to enable them to gain the necessary capabilities in the field.

Furthermore, Egypt attaches great importance to the issue of peacebuilding and reconstruction in the area, especially in countries emerging from conflict. In the context of its membership in the Peacebuilding Commission, Egypt is eager to elevate the standards of those efforts so as to reach a situation that would magnify the benefits derived from the international and regional financial institutions and to serve the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction in those States.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that Egypt is keen to continue to advance its role in the African continent. It is committed to continue and reinforce its contributions in peacekeeping operations, settling disputes and achieving security and stability in the continent. I reaffirm our confidence that the resolution to be adopted by this summit will positively contribute to consolidating the pillars of cooperation, coordination and complementarity between the efforts of the United Nations on one hand and the pivotal role undertaken by the AU and other regional organizations on the other, towards fulfilling the aspirations and ambitions of our peoples in a safe world where we all live in peace, freedom and prosperity.

The President: I next invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Olubanke King-Akerele, to take the floor.

Madam King-Akerele (Liberia): It is an honour to address this body, representing Her Excellency the President of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. She was unable to be here as she would have liked. On her behalf, we want to congratulate South Africa on its presidency of the Security Council, while commending the Council on this initiative. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his very thought-provoking report and the proposals contained therein.

I wish to state here that Liberia is an example par excellence of what can be accomplished through a combination of a regional initiative — in our case, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which took the high road in intervening in the Liberian crises in the 1990s — and then the international community, through the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in the following years.

Let me begin by referring to the intervention of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj, who addressed the Council on 14 April (*5864th meeting*) and to brief it on the status of developments in Liberia. Having benefited and continuing to benefit from an extraordinary United Nations presence through UNMIL, which combines a range of peacekeeping forces representative of the United Nations membership, we remain most grateful for that role. The peace we enjoy today is largely attributable to their presence, as well as to the fact that ECOWAS laid the foundations in the 1990s. Indeed, many of our ECOWAS brothers have paid dearly for that peace.

Given the fragility of that peace — the reasons for which were detailed by Ms. Løj — it is clear that there is still much to be done if we are to achieve sustainable peace and security. Hence the subtitle of my intervention on the issue before us today: "No sustainable security without development; no development without sustainable security".

If we are to have an enhanced and meaningful relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, that perspective must guide us. I now want to focus on a few specifics.

The objectives of the AU Peace and Security Council include the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, the anticipation and prevention of conflict and the promotion of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. In the letter dated 8 April from the Permanent Representative of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the concept paper (S/2008/229), it is indicated that today's debate will provide an opportunity to address, at the highest political level, the complex nature of some current conflicts and the need to respond in a timely manner to threats, taking into account factors such as the capacity — and, at times, the limitations — of regional organizations. Here, I want to underscore the word "threats".

Liberia wishes to submit that the growing food crisis is not only a worldwide crisis, but is also proving to be a major security issue for the continent. It is a serious threat to peace and security that could undermine the gains that are being made throughout the continent if it is not addressed urgently. A recent *Jeune Afrique* article refers to it as a food crisis that is spreading like wildfire. Thus, protests have been sparked throughout the continent, from Morocco to Mauritania and Senegal and from Côte d'Ivoire to Mozambique, Tunisia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Egypt and Tunisia. This speaks for itself.

Surely that is sufficient warning: we can ill afford to wait. Liberia proposes high-level attention and the holding, on an urgent basis, of a special meeting of the Security Council on the food crisis. We further propose that we join forces, bringing together the expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the African Union and relevant food-producing countries in Asia and food-importing countries in Africa and elsewhere to tackle this matter within the shortest time possible. We believe that, on this issue, we need the equivalent of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

In addition, this situation will undermine one of the key Millennium Development Goals, related to improving food security. This is a major security matter that needs to be tackled. It is at the core of the economics of insecurity, with which we all must be concerned if we are to achieve sustainable security.

Next, I would like to refer to Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. It is an excellent example of an important Security Council resolution that is being considered and implemented at the local and national levels in many African countries, including my own. That resolution has now been adopted in the context of an African Union declaration of heads of State. However, we need a mechanism for monitoring its implementation, and we urge the Security Council to look into that. We are pleased that, in response to the resolution, the Secretary-General has appointed a woman as his Special Representative for Liberia. Indeed, we believe that Liberia could be used as a case in point in the implementation of the resolution. Plans are under way for the Presidents of Finland and Liberia to convene a meeting in 2009 on women and international peace and security, within the framework of the resolution.

I would now like to highlight the importance of collaboration between the African Union and the United Nations Security Council to ensure stronger border security among African countries, in order to implement counter-terrorism measures and to control the trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

With regard to the series of reports on various topics submitted by United Nations panels of experts to the Security Council and other bodies, while Liberia fully appreciates their importance, we would like to emphasize that they need to include the views and contributions of the relevant countries.

As far as the African Union and Security Council forces in Darfur are concerned, there are clearly major lessons which we must learn and on the basis of which we must make corrections.

In closing, I wish to reiterate Liberia's view, in the light of its very painful experiences over the past 15 years, that Africa's leadership must, through the African Union, do everything possible to avert the looming crises that pose threats to the continent and to world peace and security. I also wish to reiterate that there can be no sustainable security without development and no development without sustainable security.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Bernadette Simvura, representative of Burundi.

Mrs. Simvura (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to convey to you, Madam President, the apologies of Her Excellency Ms. Antoinette Batumubwira, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Burundi. For reasons beyond her control, she was obliged to leave the Chamber in order to catch her flight this afternoon. She requested that I read out the following message to the Council.

> "Permit me at the outset to express the regrets of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi, who is unable to attend this meeting. The President, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, requested that I wish you, Madam President, every success in this meeting and express Burundi's commitment to work within the United Nations and the African Union for regional and international peace and security.
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> "Burundi's presence at this meeting, and its commitment to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, are based on three considerations.
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> "First, since 1 April 2008, Burundi has been a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council. Therefore, the Government of Burundi is preparing to contribute to that important task with every means at its disposal.
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> "Secondly, over the past 15 years, Burundi has benefited from the support and assistance of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and of the African Union, in particular its Peace and Security Council.
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> "In that regard, our experience as a country that has seen the deployment of Organization of African Union observer missions and the African Union Mission in Burundi, followed by the United Nations Operation in Burundi, equips us today to make a valuable contribution to the analyses and debates on issues relating to joint efforts between the United Nations and the African Union aimed at restoring and maintaining peace. Beginning with peacekeeping efforts by the United Nations and the African Union, Burundi has now moved on to the peacebuilding

phase. In that connection as well, Burundi's contribution will be enriched by our experience.

> "Thirdly, and finally, our participation in this meeting is relevant because Burundi is taking part in peacekeeping operations in Africa. A Burundian national defence force battalion is now in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia. A second battalion is preparing to deploy to Somalia. Although we have been saddened by the death of a soldier in that operation, the Government of Burundi continues to believe that it has a duty to contribute in this way to peace on our continent, all the more so because our country has enjoyed the support of many African countries and countries from other continents. In that regard, I wish in particular to refer to the large South African contingent that has already contributed a great deal in the context, initially, of African Union and, subsequently, of United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Burundi. Our military and police officers are also participating in observer missions in Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire. Burundi also plans to send troops to Chad.
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> "It is in the light of all these considerations that the Government of Burundi is here today. We hope that the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this meeting of the Security Council on Cooperation with the African Union will enjoy the full political and financial support necessary for its implementation. At stake is the credibility of our two organizations — and, more so, that of our overriding commitment to maintain regional and international peace and security."

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Sanya Štiglic, Permanent Representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Given the time constraints, I will shorten my statement. The full version is now being distributed and constitutes our official statement.

The creation of the African Union (AU) and its organs has been one of the most promising developments in recent years. It is therefore highly appropriate to focus this discussion on Africa. The very presence of such distinguished guests adds particular weight to the significance of today's debate.

I would like especially to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and his personal commitment to promoting dialogue between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The European Union is firmly committed to, and actively supports, effective multilateralism. In that context, the importance of regional organizations and their potential in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding has grown considerably over the past years. It is only to be expected that their contribution in the foreseeable future will continue to increase steadily.

The development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and a rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core is a central objective of the European Union, which recalls the primary responsibility of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. Regional organizations can reinforce and complement United Nations efforts through an active role in maintaining international peace and security, in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter, as was also stressed in resolution 1631 (2005).

The European Union seeks to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations on, inter alia, areas of crisis management and peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism, human rights, sustainable development and climate change. In recent years, the European Union has made significant progress in the development of its own crisis management structures. This has allowed the EU to deploy numerous civilian and military operations, many of them in support of or at the request of the United Nations.

Under the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, and in addition to individual EU member States' commitments, the European Union continues to support peacekeeping efforts in Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Chad and the Central African Republic, in line with substantial European Commission support. We remain committed to further developing our relationship with the United Nations, especially by working closely together in implementing the joint statement on United Nations-EU cooperation in crisis management signed in June 2007.

The second European Union-Africa Summit, held in Lisbon in 2007, laid down the foundations of a strategic partnership. We have reached a new milestone in our cooperation. In the field of peace and security, the first priority of the partnership aims at strengthening dialogue to reach common positions and implement common approaches on challenges to peace and security in Africa, in Europe and globally. The second priority is to work together towards the full and effective functioning of the African peace and security architecture, in particular through the African standby force, the Continental Early Warning System and regional mechanisms and organizations. The third priority is to provide predictable and sustainable financing for Africa-led peace support operations, to ensure that the AU and regional mechanisms will be able to plan and conduct peace support operations. Substantial support has been provided to capacity-building at the regional and subregional levels, as well as to specific African-led peace operations, including in Darfur, Somalia and the Central African Republic. These operations have been supported by the Peace Facility for Africa, through which €350 million has already been committed, and by bilateral contributions of EU member States. Furthermore, we are working with the Group of Eight (G-8) and other members of the international community to contribute to the funding of African-led peace support operations.

A culture of prevention is indeed gaining ground, as is the understanding of the need to strengthen and support the tools used when responding to situations that could potentially lead to violence. In parallel, more attention has been given to addressing the root causes of conflict. The sooner we act to prevent conflict, the greater the chances of success.

The EU recognizes the importance of different conflict prevention tools, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/18). The use of quiet diplomacy and preventive mediation, such as the Mediation Support Unit of the Department for Political Affairs, as well as the effective use of sanctions and the Secretary-General's good offices, are essential in de-escalating potential violent conflicts.

The European Union believes that it is essential to include civil society in conflict prevention, as it promotes encouraging links between civil society and Government, as well as local ownership. Moreover, women should play a positive role in conflict prevention, and they are still underrepresented in formal stages of conflict prevention. Similarly, the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005) on children affected by armed conflict continues to require further application.

The European Union considers the Peacebuilding Commission to be an important achievement of the United Nations reform process. We welcome the engagement the Commission has shown in Burundi and Sierra Leone in the first year of operation, and welcome the placing of Guinea-Bissau on its agenda. Through the European Development Fund and other European Commission instruments, the EU plays a major role in assisting those countries in meeting their peacebuilding challenges. The recent launch of the European Security and Defence Policy mission in support of security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau further reaffirms the EU's readiness to use its full policy mix of instruments in support of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The European Union remains committed to international justice, which is particularly relevant in conflict areas. We firmly believe that there can be no impunity, in particular for the most serious crimes, and that there can be no long-standing peace without justice.

While the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with Member States, the international community is crucial in providing much-needed support, especially through regional and subregional organizations. The recent support provided by the United Nations and the EU to such organizations in their efforts to improve relations between political parties in Kenya, as well as ongoing international and regional efforts in dealing with humanitarian and security situations such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and Somalia, only reaffirm the need to further cooperation with regional organizations.

The European Union remains very concerned about the political situation in Zimbabwe and will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground and support efforts towards ensuring democracy, stability, economic recovery and respect for human rights. The European Union supports the call launched at the special summit of the Southern Africa Development Community for the expeditious release of the presidential election results, in accordance with the due process of law. It reiterates its concern at the prolonged and unexplained delay in releasing the presidential results, which is undermining the credibility of the process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank South Africa for its leadership in convening this debate. Let me reaffirm that it is a priority for the European Union to continue providing its expertise and resources to peace and stability in Africa as a partner of both the United Nations and the African Union.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vanu Gopala Menon, Permanent Representative of Singapore.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): I am making this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Today, we live in a more complex and interconnected world, with many new actors on the international stage and more variables and alignments to consider. While the threat of global war has receded, there has been an increase in the number of smaller conflicts. Those are often asymmetric, low-intensity and diffused. It has become a messier world. The situation presents new challenges to global peace and security. Obviously, the United Nations has a crucial role to play, but in a globalized world regional cooperation can also play a key role. Even the United Nations Charter recognizes the role that regional arrangements can play in helping the United Nations to achieve its objectives.

ASEAN and the African Union (AU) are examples of regional organizations that have helped to build and protect regional peace and security. We note that many ASEAN members have long-standing historical ties with Africa. Since 1955, the Bandung Asian-African Conference has promoted the Bandung spirit of solidarity, friendship and cooperation between Asia and Africa. That spirit was reaffirmed by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa on behalf of the African Union at the eighth ASEAN summit in Cambodia in November 2002. President Mbeki not only recalled the historical roots of cooperation between Asia and Africa, but he also commended ASEAN's programmes in South-South cooperation and its determined efforts to promote a region free of nuclear weapons and terrorism.

In response, ASEAN leaders found much common ground with African aspirations and acknowledged the need for greater interaction between ASEAN and the AU. They acknowledged the need for greater interaction between the two regional organizations, including a possible meeting between the two secretariats. They also agreed to take steps to promote stronger ties between Asia and Africa, including convening an ASEAN-New Partnership for Africa's Development conference.

That idea was soon followed by the Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference (AASROC) process, which was initiated in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2003. A second AASROC was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2004. In 2005, an Asia-Africa Summit was held in Bandung, commemorating the golden jubilee of the Bandung spirit. At the Summit, the leaders of the Asian and African countries adopted a declaration on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership to serve as a framework for building stronger links between Asia and Africa covering three broad areas of partnership — political solidarity, economic cooperation and sociocultural relations. The Strategic Partnership would address issues of common concern, such as armed conflicts, weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime and terrorism, which are fundamental to ensuring peace, stability and security. In that respect, ASEAN looks forward to the further strengthening of cooperation with the AU.

As a regional organization, the AU serves as a key forum for African States to interact and cooperate with each other to promote such common objectives as good governance, sustainable development, and peace and stability. For example, AU peacekeepers have been deployed to areas such as Burundi, Somalia, the Comoros and Darfur. We note that a mutually beneficial AU-United Nations partnership has grown over the years and continues to serve as a good example of how regional organizations can positively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. ASEAN supports all efforts to strengthen the AU-United Nations partnership.

On our part, ASEAN has evolved into a multifaceted organization with cooperation in many fields. A shared sense of destiny and community motivated us to conclude the ASEAN Charter last year. The Charter reflects our common vision and commitment to the development of an ASEAN community as a region of lasting peace and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress. It will remake ASEAN into a more effective and rules-based organization in today's rapidly changing global landscape.

ASEAN has always regarded economic cooperation as a key factor to achieving peace and prosperity in the region. In that regard, our leaders adopted an ASEAN economic community blueprint last year to integrate the 10 ASEAN economies into one single market and production base. We will also be developing similar blueprints for our other two pillars — political security and sociocultural cooperation. For example, within ASEAN, we have recently instituted the ASEAN defence ministers meeting to further enhance mutual trust and confidence among our defence establishments and to explore practical and concrete cooperation. That allows us to actively address non-traditional and transborder security concerns among our members and with external partners.

In conclusion, allow me to express ASEAN's appreciation to the AU and the United Nations for the growing collaboration over the years. As observed by President Mbeki in 2002, the potential for ASEAN and the AU to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation is significant. As for ASEAN-United Nations cooperation, that has existed since our establishment in 1967. We are pleased that ASEAN acquired formal observer status in the United Nations in 2006, and concluded a memorandum of understanding on ASEAN-United Nations cooperation the following year. Those moves reaffirm the mutual commitment between our regional grouping and the United Nations. ASEAN looks forward to enhanced cooperation with both the AU and the United Nations in working towards preserving international peace and security and promoting sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should also like to commend your initiative to convene this debate to enhance the Security Council's role in strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his successful presidency of the Council last month.

In view of the geographical and historical ties between the African Union (AU) and the League of Arab States, I want to stress the importance of horizontal cooperation among regional organizations. This is exemplified by the distinguished record of cooperation between the Arab League and the AU. Eighty per cent of Arab League citizens reside on the African continent, and 50 per cent of the League's member States are also members of the African Union. Moreover, 20 per cent of African Union member States are members of the League of Arab States. This unique situation must be taken into account in considering the advantages offered by horizontal cooperation between the two organizations.

In the light of their common responsibilities and the interrelated interests of their member States, regional organizations possess distinct advantages that enable them to address regional challenges and threats to international peace and security. These include their proximity to conflict areas and their knowledge and well-informed views on the specifics of the conflicts.

The great challenges of the first years of the twenty-first century have resulted in stronger cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the implementation of the relevant resolutions and statements of the Security Council and of the provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1).

In the framework of the shared responsibility of the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and of the geographic and demographic interrelationship between the Arab League and the African Union, the two organizations have been taking positive steps in the settlement of conflict issues. Effective cooperation between our organizations has proven to be a viable approach to resolving a number of crises and other issues, along with strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and our two organizations with a view to safeguarding security and stability throughout the African continent. We have witnessed this in the Sudan peace negotiations and in the process of finding a way to resolve the Darfur crisis, as well as in the effort to attain security and stability in Somalia and, more recently, in the Union of the Comoros. This embodies the concept of tripartite cooperation among the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union.

The Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has become inevitable; it is at the heart of the interests and the policies of regional organizations, owing to the positive and effective role those organizations play in addressing regional issues and in the peaceful settlement of disputes. Regional organizations make an effective contribution to strengthening United Nations capacities, especially in the spheres of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and exchanges of expertise.

The Security Council should undertake effective cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union, in order to bolster its important role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in conflict prevention. It should define guiding principles for the expansion of dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in order to foster the political will needed to maintain peace and to implement the relevant resolutions.

In the context of strengthening the partnership between the African Union and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must be more responsive and must make a greater effort to achieve the partnership we are seeking and to overcome the challenges it is facing. This would be facilitated by early warning systems to address and manage crises before they escalate, as well as by a process by which to allocate responsibilities and by an expansion of the scope of AU-Security Council cooperation and consultation.

Enhancing the regional dimension of peacemaking and strengthening the leading role of the AU in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa are of great importance, and the Security Council must provide logistical and technical support to AU member States as they work to maintain the peace in post-conflict situations. It is also important to improve coordination among various African initiatives, to provide peacekeeping training and to establish regional centres in order to prevent crises from recurring and to enhance the financial and administrative capacity of the AU with respect to peacekeeping operations, the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian aid to those affected by conflict.

Issues related to international peace and security are closely linked with those related to development and economic growth in Africa; thus, the United Nations must not view African issues in strictly security or political terms. These are economic and development issues as well, and they require greater political will to provide further support to the AU, enabling it to address and overcome the challenges facing it, to make progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and to free the continent from conflict.

In addition, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security must be enhanced in the framework of United Nations reform. That means reforming its institutions and improving its performance to equip it better to confront the challenges facing the international community.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): First of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, and, through you, to all the other members of the Council for giving me the opportunity to address this high-level meeting in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission is actively engaged in effectively supporting post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, in the belief that the measure of its success is real impact on the ground.

In accordance with its mandate, the Peacebuilding Commission is striving to marshal support and resources for peacebuilding and recovery in post-conflict countries and to improve coordination within and outside the United Nations system in an integrated manner. We have been trying our best to enhance cooperation with partners beyond the United Nations system, such as regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and civil society.

One of the key observations from our intensive work is that all peacebuilding efforts require addressing the regional as well as the local dimensions. As most conflicts have significant regional dimensions, it is indispensable to engage regional and subregional organizations in the process. Issues such as the illicit trade in arms and narcotics trafficking cannot be addressed without coordinated regional and international efforts, including effective border control among the countries in a given region. Youth unemployment and a lack of economic opportunities are widely recognized as a common challenge to post-conflict societies. This problem also requires a regional approach, as unemployed youth often move from one place to another in search of employment opportunities, including, sometimes, as soldiers. The Peacebuilding Commission has analysed those issues and has offered practical guidance in our country-specific activities and in the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

The Peacebuilding Commission truly values the ongoing efforts of regional and subregional organizations. These organizations play an important role in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. At the same time, their activities are more effective when they are fully integrated into, and well coordinated with, the overall work of the Commission. Successful peacebuilding requires the sustained engagement of multifaceted stakeholders with diverse expertise and specialties. I recognize the essential added value that the Peacebuilding Commission can provide with its convening role of mobilizing the dedicated efforts of all stakeholders.

The founding resolutions of the Peacebuilding Commission refer directly to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and thereby provide a strong rationale for close collaboration between the Commission and regional and subregional organizations. The Commission will explore practical and flexible ways to cooperate and make a concrete difference on the ground.

The first three countries to be considered by the Commission, namely, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, are all in Africa. As a member of all three country-specific configurations of the Commission, the African Union has been an effective and active contributor to the Council's deliberations, both in New York and on the ground. We value and appreciate the Union's effective partnership. In that connection, I would like to suggest two ways of promoting more enhanced collaboration between the African Union and the Peacebuilding Commission.

First, the African Union may wish to have more active inputs in the process of drafting and implementing the integrated peacebuilding strategies of the Peacebuilding Commission and to align itself more closely with them. The strategies are articulated in such a way as to minimize the risk of relapse into conflict, and they thus also contribute to conflict prevention. The integrated strategies elaborated for Burundi and Sierra Leone serve as a good basis for cooperation activities by the African Union.

Secondly, we see great potential in harmonizing the policy framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development adopted by the African Union's Executive Council and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, which take similar approaches to promoting post-conflict peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Support Office is engaged in active collaboration with the AU's subcluster on the policy framework, which is expected to produce tangible benefits for both the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council. Those efforts will also facilitate the development of linkages between post-conflict reconstruction and development.

In conclusion, I can tell the Council that we are making great strides in fostering close collaboration between the Peacebuilding Commission and regional and subregional organizations, starting with the African Union, to promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Africa. I intend to consult further with members of the Commission on how it can best address that need. The Commission's planned meeting tomorrow afternoon with the Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council will provide a useful opportunity to that end. I look forward to fruitful discussions on that occasion.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian, Permanent Representative of Ghana.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I wish to congratulate South Africa on presiding over the Security Council for the month of April and on organizing this debate. I wish to convey to the Council fraternal greetings from His Excellency President J. A. Kufuor, who was prevented from coming to New York by pressing matters of State and the forthcoming twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held in Accra.

Ghana appreciates the continued support of the United Nations and the international community aimed at the resolution of the conflicts in Africa, including the deployment of two thirds of all United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as the commendable contributions of relief agencies towards the alleviation of the plight of persons displaced by conflicts. While there has been significant progress in the resolution of some conflicts in Africa, the current situation in other parts of the continent demands our most urgent attention.

The role of the United Nations remains crucial in Africa's quest for a new era of peace and stability. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which explicitly prescribes a role for regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, dictates the need for a close and symbiotic relationship between the United Nations and the African Union, given the current situation on our continent.

In that connection, it is my delegation's view that, if we are to ensure more effective resolution of conflicts in Africa, there should be a calculated and conscious strategy aimed at promoting the interdependence of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. That requires, among other things, full implementation of the 10-year capacity-building framework for cooperation concluded between the Secretary-General and the African Union Commission in November 2006.

The lack of resources, coupled with other factors, has undermined the deployment of African Union peacekeeping operations in Africa. Therefore, we urge the United Nations Security Council and the international community to step up their efforts to address the critical resource gaps.

As recent reports of the Secretary-General have shown, the cost of prevention is far less than the cost of resolving conflicts. Therefore, the need to pursue a strategy of prevention, which entails tackling the underlying causes of conflict and instability, should receive the priority attention of the international community. To that end, we call upon the international community, in particular the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, to actively support the African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework, adopted in 2006, which focuses on tackling the root causes of conflict and thereby preventing the occurrence or recurrence of crises.

In that regard, we acknowledge the important contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission, of which Ghana is a current Vice-Chair, to the ongoing efforts to rebuild Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, aimed at ensuring sustainable peace in those countries, which remain on the agendas of both the Security Council and the Commission.

Africa's development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), reaffirms the commitment of African States to the tenets of good governance and democracy, underpinned by the promotion of economic and social justice and scrupulous respect for human rights and the rule of law, as prerequisites for durable peace and security.

Ghana is proud to be among the African countries that have so far subscribed to the African Peer Review Mechanism in the context of NEPAD — a process by which the quality of national governance in our country is subjected to external scrutiny. It is our firm conviction that it is only through such constructive processes that Africa will emerge stronger and more resilient. We are optimistic that the goals of the African renaissance, namely, peace, stability and prosperity, will be attained sooner rather than later throughout the entire continent of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Francis K. Butagira, Permanent Representative of Uganda.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Let me take this opportunity to thank the South African presidency of the Security Council for organizing this important debate. My delegation is also extremely pleased at the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, who has devoted so much time to the cause of global peace and security.

In June last year in Addis Ababa, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council issued a joint communiqué by which they committed themselves to the development of a stronger and more structured relationship between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council on conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including post-conflict reconstruction and development. They further agreed to strengthen the relationships between all the relevant structures of the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

We encourage close consultations between the African Union and this important organ of the United Nations, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security.

Africa is inspired by the spirit of collective security of the Charter of the United Nations. It was out of that fundamental conviction and commitment that the AU and the AU Peace and Security Council were born to oversee Africa's regional peace and security concerns. We firmly believe that collective security should be applied equitably, without discrimination.

To millions of Africans, tangible improvements relating to development, security and the enhancement of human security remain pivotal. That is why we are encouraged by the report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2008/186). The operations of regional organizations and their relations with the United Nations must be predicated on the principle of multilateralism. Hence, the efforts of the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council are mutually reinforcing. However, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The effectiveness of the AU's Peace and Security Council is premised on three principles: first, the ability to enforce agreed norms among AU member States, secondly, the will to harmonize Africa's regional security arrangements and, thirdly, the commitment by African Governments to provide sustainable and predictable financing for AU peace initiatives.

Regrettably, for this new and struggling organization that is grappling with a multiplicity of problems, there are deficiencies in all three areas. That is why we have come here to make an earnest plea that peacekeeping operations undertaken by the AU be covered by the regular budget of the United Nations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda has made reference to that particular aspect, as did President Kikwete of Tanzania this morning.

The international community must demonstrate similar concern and generosity to Africa as it did with regard to Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan. For instance, in 2000, while $2 billion was pledged for the reconstruction of the Balkans, barely $150 million was pledged for Sierra Leone. Thirty thousand NATO troops were deployed in Kosovo, as contrasted with 16,700 United Nations troops in the enormous country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The AU Mission in Darfur was grossly underfunded, and it had a shortfall of $200 million in July 2005. The United Nations is dragging its feet in assuming its full responsibility to deploy in Somalia.

In order to allay fears that Africa is a breeding ground for terrorists, concerted efforts must be made to stem the tide of State failure. That means that the United Nations must invest not only in governance and capacity-building but also in enabling African States to address basic socio-economic problems such as the provision of education and health services. Poverty, alienation and dehumanizing conditions can lead to desperation and terrorism.

Another issue of special concern to my delegation is the need for the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the AU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to establish a symbiotic relationship in the post-conflict and reconstruction areas. Such a relationship should be based on complementarity and the avoidance of duplication. They should enter into mutual relations to address the multiple challenges that war-affected societies face. They should establish a network of institutions and mechanisms to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Africa, to make them coherent and practical on the ground. The Commission should avoid being politicized, lest it become irrelevant. There is a need for a programmatic and well-funded United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

In conclusion, there is an overwhelming need for the Commission to deepen its relationship with the AU, NEPAD and other organs.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Araya Desta, Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Desta (Eritrea): At the outset, I wish to thank your delegation, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. I also wish to express my delegation's profound appreciation for being invited to this debate on peace and security in Africa, which has been organized by South Africa in its capacity as President of the Security Council. My country holds this issue dear. President Isaias Afwerki has expressed his regret for not being able to attend this meeting due to other earlier commitments.

In the interest of time, I will briefly highlight the views of my Government on certain critical issues facing Africa. As many speakers who have spoken before me have highlighted the importance of improving the institutional cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, consistent with General Assembly resolution 61/296 of 17 September 2007, I shall limit my statement to a few elements.

The challenge is to build on existing cooperation in a manner that tackles crises and conflicts on the ground by means of real tangible commitments: first, by addressing African priorities; secondly, by having a common political and security assessment of a given conflict situation; thirdly, by being able to clearly define the role of each institution; fourthly, by initiating joint operations on clearly defined objectives; and, fifthly, by developing a comprehensive strategy to resolve conflicts and other pertinent issues. All of that requires strong political and financial commitments on the part of both institutions to resolve many of ongoing conflicts.

As the agenda of the Security Council demonstrates, Africa is the region that suffers most from intra-State and inter-State conflicts. Both the United Nations and the African Union are engaged in addressing many of those conflicts. Most of the conflicts continue to cause loss of life and immeasurable suffering to the people of our continent. The progress made in some conflict situations is laudable and promising. Yet, in others the response has been slow, necessitating that efforts be accelerated in order to end the suffering and frustration of the peoples affected.

Eritrea, which has risen from the ashes of war itself, is making an effort to contribute to peace and stability in the Sudan and Chad. It remains committed to regional peace and stability. In the same spirit and with the same objective as in southern and eastern parts of the Sudan, Eritrea has been working unreservedly in partnership with the United Nations, the African Union and neighbouring countries to bring all stakeholders to the negotiating table, with a view to reaching and concluding a peace agreement in Darfur.

It is important to assess every conflict situation objectively, on its own merits. Regional peace and security are maintained not by circumventing peace agreements when their implementation is being prevented, but by maintaining the integrity of those agreements and by accepting and respecting the authority of the bodies empowered by peace accords to carry out their mandates. When a peace treaty is breached and international law is violated, the Security Council, as the United Nations body empowered to maintain international peace and security, should exercise its moral and legal obligation to bring the parties into compliance, in the interests of peace and security. The African Union must also add its voice and moral authority to ensure that the rule of law is respected.

I would not want to conclude my statement without concurring with the views expressed by many that the support given to the African Union should be predictable and sustainable and that more time and resources should be devoted to preventing conflicts in our region.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1809 (2008).

I wish to thank all the participants for joining together to make this meeting possible. My thanks go to all the heads of State and Government, ministers and other representatives, as well as to the Secretary-General.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5869

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5869th meeting

Thursday, 17 April 2008, 5.40 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Mubarak
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Cyprus

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 5.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Cyprus

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council warmly welcomes the agreement reached on 21 March 2008 by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders and commends them for the political leadership they have shown.
>
> "The Security Council is encouraged by the launch of the Working Groups and the Technical Committees that will prepare the ground for the start of fully fledged negotiations, in a spirit of good faith, on a comprehensive and durable settlement under the auspices of the Secretary-General's good offices mission. The Security Council looks forward to the results of this preparatory process within the three-month timeline agreed by the two leaders, which it is hoped will build trust, momentum and a sense of common interest in the search for a just and lasting solution.
>
> "The Security Council further welcomes the opening of the Ledra Street crossing, as an indication of political will to tackle issues that have obstructed progress and an important signal that both sides seek to improve the lives of all Cypriots. The Security Council looks forward to further such confidence-building measures.
>
> "The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the reunification of Cyprus based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, and its willingness to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to this end. In this context, the Security Council welcomes the readiness of the Secretary-General to assist the parties in Cyprus, and further welcomes the prospect of the appointment, after the completion of the preparatory period and based on progress, of a Special Adviser to facilitate movement towards a comprehensive settlement.
>
> "The Security Council welcomes the appointment of Tayé-Brook Zerihoun as the Secretary-General's new Special Representative to Cyprus, and expresses its appreciation for the work of the previous Special Representative, Michael Møller."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/9.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations
S/PV.5870

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 April 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5870th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 April 2008, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "On 21 April 2008, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5870th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.
>
> "The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Julian Harston, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.
>
> "Members of the Council, Mr. Harston and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

United Nations

S/PV.5871

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 April 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5871st (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 April 2008, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "At its 5871st meeting, held in private on 21 April 2008, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)'.
>
> "The President, with the consent of the Council, invited His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia and the representatives of Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.
>
> "In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Joachim Rücker, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.
>
> "In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the President, with the consent of the Council, also extended an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hashim Thaci.
>
> "Members of the Council, Mr. Joachim Rücker, His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaci had an exchange of views."

United Nations

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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5872nd meeting

Tuesday, 22 April 2008, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Belle
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/196)

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/249)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/196)

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/249)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Adada to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Holmes to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them two reports of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, contained in documents S/2008/196 and S/2008/249.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur, and Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

I now give the floor to Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur.

Mr. Adada: I have my own statement for the Security Council, but I would present, with your permission, a very short update on the political process that the two Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, have asked me to present to the Council.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for providing me with this opportunity to brief the Council. The 90-day report of the Secretary-General offers comprehensive information on the reporting period in question. Today, I will focus on the current security, humanitarian and political situation in Darfur.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was deployed in accordance with resolution 1769 (2007), with a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The central expectation placed upon us by the people of Darfur and the international community, through the solemn decision of the Security Council, is to provide protection for the civilians of Darfur. The people of Darfur have suffered terribly from war during the past five years, and the world has demanded unequivocally that this suffering be brought to an end. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is the primary instrument chosen by the Council for that task.

As I speak today, I must report frankly that there is a long way to go before we can say that we have met those expectations and fulfilled the promise made by the Council. Our forces are serving under exceptionally difficult conditions, facing daily dangers and hardships. I am obliged to report that the obstacles they need to surmount and the risks that they run have not diminished over the past three months.

In spite of all our efforts, it remains the case that three months into UNAMID's operations, the force strength has not increased much from the strength of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) as it was at the end of December 2007. The force is at less than 40 per cent of its mandated level of 19,555 and it is very unlikely to achieve full operating capability before 2009.

The key challenges are therefore to ensure that the former AMIS units and incoming units from troop-contributing countries are self-sustaining. Otherwise, measures must be put in place to assist them on the ground. The majority of the former AMIS bases that are being retained by UNAMID require expanding and refurbishing. Furthermore, the deteriorating conditions of roads in Darfur and the approaching rainy season will make the main supply routes impassable in many areas. All these challenges will require exceptional logistics and engineering operations which will dictate the rate of deployment of new and expanded units.

In light of all these complications, the mission is finalizing a list of vital emergency measures needed to reposition the deployment back on track. The achievement of the mission's new deployment goals and the application of these measures will once again depend heavily on the timely and unhindered cooperation of all the stakeholders.

Having said that, I am happy to inform the Council that a number of deployments by troop-contributing countries are scheduled over the next three months, including the main body of the Chinese engineering company, the Egyptian infantry battalion, the Egyptian signals, engineering and transport companies, the Bangladeshi multi-role logistics company and the Nigerian level-II hospital. The Ethiopian advance party has arrived in El Fasher, and their deployment is expected to be completed in June. All these deployments are dependent upon the arrival of the contingent-owned equipment in Darfur.

During the next three months we expect the four Nigerian battalions and the South African battalion to rotate. The combination of the planned deployments and the rotation will put UNAMID under considerable pressure. Owing to the very long line of communication from Port Sudan into Darfur, the difficult road conditions and the lack of capacity among local contractors, the risk of delays remains high.

The Force Commander's priority is to have the 10 existing infantry battalions brought up to the United Nations contingent-owned equipment and self-sustaining standards. This is a considerable challenge since, although troop-contributing countries can generate the troops, many of them are unable to meet United Nations requirements. I should like to express the mission's appreciation to the donors for their initiative to increase the operational capability of troop-contributors.

Since the transfer of authority, UNAMID is still lacking five critical operational capabilities: attack helicopters, surveillance aircraft, medium-lift support helicopters, military engineers and logistical support. An offer to meet part of the attack and medium-lift helicopter requirement has been made by Ethiopia, and an initial reconnaissance has been carried out by that country.

I am happy to confirm that UNAMID police and civilian components are gradually increasing their impact on the ground in Darfur. Patrols are being conducted for substantially longer periods over greater areas of Darfur and now take place on a daily basis. More protection is being provided to vulnerable groups during firewood collection, enhancing security around the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and providing better protection, especially for the women in the IDP camps.

In addition, police advisers have held several public forums with the leadership of the IDP camps to explain the UNAMID police mandate and duties, the concept of community policing and violence against women. The introduction of the community policing concept has culminated in the registration and training of 287 IDP volunteers, 30 of whom are women.

The mission remains concerned with the security situation on the ground and the lack of systematic or sustained protection for vulnerable civilians in Darfur. In this context, the recent Government attacks on villages in the northern corridor of West Darfur left at least 100 civilians dead and caused tens of thousands to flee their homes. The attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces were in response to an earlier attack by the Justice and Equality Movement at the beginning of the year. These acts constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and need to be strongly condemned. All the parties involved in the conflict must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and implement their obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and existing ceasefire agreements.

While security is primary concern of the mission, and the one that has the most direct impact on the lives of civilians in Darfur, UNAMID continues to push for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict. The mission is fully committed to supporting the work of the Special Envoys and will continue to encourage all stakeholders to reach a negotiated solution.

Despite all these relentless efforts, I am afraid that the prospects for the peace process in Darfur remain very slim. The senior staff of UNAMID continues to meet with the representatives of the signatories and non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Unfortunately, it is commonly understood today in Darfur that peace is not at all attractive, either economically or politically. Signatories of the DPA have not only lost most of their political credibility and popular backing from the grass roots in Darfur; they also have expressed their deep frustration and disappointment about the lack of financial, political and logistical support they receive from the international community and the Government of the Sudan. Non-signatories are, however, still being armed and enjoy the logistical and financial support which allows them to sustain the political backing in Darfur. All local and international actors need to exert serious efforts to reverse this dangerous trend.

Furthermore, the conflicts in Darfur and Chad are now closely linked. In the current state of affairs, it is difficult to consider a solution to one conflict without taking the other into account. UNAMID will remain in close contact with the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and with those African and international leaders who are engaged in seeking a solution to the problems between the Sudan and Chad.

Among the priorities of the mission, as the body mandated by resolution 1769 (2007) to contribute to the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, are reviving the Joint Commission and restructuring the Ceasefire Commission so that it can have a meaningful mechanism for monitoring and verifying violations of the ceasefire agreement. In the absence of a widely supported peace agreement, the Ceasefire Commission is a crucial tool for the implementation of the mission's mandate.

The challenges facing UNAMID are formidable in every respect. There are such high hopes in the mission that the warm reception that Darfurians have given it could very quickly degenerate into deep frustration. It is disturbing to note that, although Darfur is at the top of the international agenda, this attention has not thus far been translated into action to provide UNAMID with the means to accomplish its mission.

In resolution 1769 (2007), the Council gave the mission an extraordinary mandate, corresponding to the international community's level of concern at the unacceptable human suffering in Darfur. Carrying out that mandate on the ground requires tools that are equal to the task. It would be a tragedy if the high hopes for that mandate — particularly the responsibility to protect millions of innocent civilians who continue to live in fear — were to be dashed.

The Council has consistently stated that it considers Darfur to be among the most important crises today, and Council members have committed themselves to ensuring that a force capable of addressing the complexities of the conflict is deployed in an effective and timely manner. Therefore, I appeal to the Council to redouble its efforts to assist the mission in overcoming the logistical and political obstacles that it currently faces.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude for the good cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in bringing about the progress made thus far by UNAMID. And, on behalf of all my colleagues, I thank the Council for having given me this opportunity to speak about the work of UNAMID.

(*spoke in English*)

With the Council's permission, I shall now read out the following brief statement by the Special Envoys, which provides an update on the political process.

> "As members of the Council are aware, it will be very difficult for UNAMID to implement its mandate and protect the civilians of Darfur if there is no peace to keep. According to Special Envoys Eliasson and Salim, prospects for comprehensive substantive talks in the near future are dim. Their emphasis is now on reducing the level of violence and preparing a cessation of hostilities.
>
> "The five movement groupings have made little progress in unifying their positions and agreeing on a negotiation team. The Government of National Unity lacks a coherent Darfur strategy. The security situation has deteriorated dramatically. Relations between Chad and Sudan

have been strained, and humanitarian access has been threatened.

"In view of the dire security situation, the Special Envoys have re-emphasized the primacy of a political solution and have refocused the work of the mediation on establishing a dialogue between the parties on security-related matters. On 17 and 18 March in Geneva, they held consultations with regional and international partners to discuss the way forward. There was agreement among all participants that improving the security situation in Darfur, as well as normalizing the relationship between Sudan and Chad, was essential in order to make progress on the political track.

"Since the Geneva meeting, the Joint Mediation Support Team has shuttled between the movements and the Government to determine the conditions under which the parties could engage in a dialogue on security issues, including the framework for a cessation of hostilities. To highlight the urgency of the matter, the Special Envoys were in Khartoum, Juba and Darfur over the past two weeks, exploring with the parties the possibility of convening such consultations. The Government of Sudan has set up a technical team to work with the mediation. The Envoys have stressed the importance of involving both Minni Minawi and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in these discussions.

"In meetings with the representatives of the United Resistance Front, Abdul Wahid and Khalil Ibrahim, the movements agreed with the Envoys that improving the security situation is the first priority. Concrete steps are now being taken to move forward as soon as possible on establishing a dialogue between the parties under African Union and United Nations auspices. The Joint Mediation Support Team is also continuing its work to find common ground among Sudanese civil society, political parties, traditional leaders and the internally displaced population on the various issues related to peace in Darfur, including the census and the elections."

The President: I thank Mr. Adada for his own statement and also for reading out the statement by the facilitators of the political process.

I now give the floor to Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to provide the Council with an update on the humanitarian situation to complement what members just heard from the Joint Special Representative.

The Council first discussed Darfur four years ago this month. Sadly, many of the observations that my predecessor made at that time remain only too relevant today: growing numbers of displaced, continuing hostilities and violence against civilians, increasing humanitarian needs and limited access to beneficiaries. The difference is that almost six times as many people are now affected. Jan Egeland spoke in April 2004 of approximately 750,000 people in danger. Of Darfur's estimated 6 million people, some 4.27 million have now been seriously affected by the conflict; 2.45 million are internally displaced, while an additional 260,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

One year ago, I briefed the Council myself for the first time, following my first visit to Darfur as Emergency Relief Coordinator. I am sad to say that the humanitarian situation is as grim today as it was then, if not more so. In 2008 so far, a further 100,000 civilians have been forced to flee, many of them not for the first time. Nearly 60,000 were displaced in West Darfur alone. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel movement was responsible for initiating the latest round of violence there by attacking Government installations, including reportedly launching attacks from within civilian areas, with the civilian population bearing the brunt of the consequences. But military units of the Government of Sudan once again used disproportionate force and failed to differentiate between military and civilian targets in their response, including aerial bombardments. Last month's report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted targeted attacks on civilians during that campaign, in particular through the use of Janjaweed militias to terrorize the population before the arrival of regular forces.

Elsewhere in Darfur, too, hostilities between the parties, intra-rebel and tribal clashes, aerial bombardments and the resurgence of Janjaweed militias have resulted in death, displacement and widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Cross-border attacks and support for each other's rebel groups by Chad and the Sudan have further destabilized security in both countries, despite efforts to reduce tensions following the Dakar Agreement.

Darfur today is therefore still characterized by insecurity, lawlessness and impunity. The effects on civilians are not difficult to imagine. Widespread human rights abuses continue to be reported in many areas. A particularly worrying feature is evidence of high levels of sexual violence and exploitation in the northern corridor of West Darfur over the past two months — for example, judged by the dramatically increased number of women and girls seeking treatment for the effects of those brutal acts and statistics for sexually transmitted infections treated at local health clinics.

In my previous trips to Darfur, I met women who had the courage to tell me some of their stories, while the authorities have continued to deny that any such thing could exist in their country. Sexual violence in Darfur is not a figment of our collective imaginations. I call upon the Government, which has the primary responsibility for the protection of its citizens, to take concrete steps to address this scourge, and on the armed groups to help stamp it out.

The humanitarian community itself is also subject to constant violence. Since the start of the year we have seen 106 vehicles hijacked — 46 United Nations and non-governmental organization vehicles and 60 trucks contracted to the World Food Programme (WFP). One WFP-contracted driver has been killed and 26 drivers are still missing. The rate of hijackings is more than 350 per cent higher than even the already alarming statistics of 2007.

So far in 2008, 42 humanitarian premises have been assaulted, and six aid workers killed. Rebel groups and individuals associated with them appear to be primarily responsible for the attacks on convoys and hijackings, whether their motives are military or criminal. All that is seriously jeopardizing efforts to deliver aid, and in particular to preposition relief supplies ahead of the rainy season. It also comes at a time when several key humanitarian indicators are getting worse, including those on malnutrition, which is now in excess of emergency threshold levels in many areas of Darfur.

That may sound a sadly familiar story, if no less unacceptable for that. But we need also to be aware of the cumulative effects of continued violence, stress and upheaval in Darfur. Those in the camps feel helpless and voiceless. The fear of never being able to return to their areas of origin and the pressure by Government authorities to return when conditions are clearly not right lead to increasing tension, polarization, politicization and even militarization.

But the conflict and the continuing degradation of traditional social structures after five years of fighting and flight have serious consequences not just for the stability of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), but more fundamentally for the long-term stability of Darfur itself. How many will be able, or indeed even willing, to return to their previous lives when peace finally arrives? Normality cannot simply be suspended for five years or more and then resume as if nothing had happened. That problem is aggravated every month that passes without peace.

Meanwhile even relatively untouched rural communities are increasingly vulnerable and require our assistance in growing numbers. In some areas, for example, the price of staple commodities such as millet has doubled since this time last year. That partly reflects the global phenomenon of rising food prices and partly unfavourable weather, but it is also a result of general dislocation and neglect as so many fields go untilled and infestations of disease and pests go unchecked. Unfortunately, we cannot always access those rural communities. It is inevitable that some of their inhabitants too will end by migrating to IDP camps — many of which are currently well beyond capacity — in search of assistance. We are already seeing this in Al Salaam camp in south Darfur, where approximately 1,000 newly arrived families remain unregistered, with 17 deaths among that group during the month of March alone.

There is a risk that developments will take an even more serious turn. The World Food Programme announced last week that it would be forced to reduce its food distributions next month. Regular attacks on its convoys, in particular on the roads from Kordofan to El Fasher in north Darfur and Ed Daein in south Darfur, mean that they have simply not been able to preposition food stocks as necessary and cannot now catch up without a radical transformation of the position. That means that the amount of food provided to the conflict-affected men, women and children in Darfur will be halved in a matter of days. That heartbreaking decision could not come at a worse time, as the agency continues to struggle in any case to deliver to its existing beneficiaries as the rainy season approaches.

During that period malaria, water-borne diseases, respiratory infections and other illnesses normally cause mortality to increase in Darfur. The effects on those further weakened by poor nutrition are likely to be much worse. Global acute malnutrition in children under the age of five, for example, which is already in excess of emergency thresholds in many areas of Darfur, could double. It is therefore vital that the Government of the Sudan does much more to protect those convoys and that the armed groups stop such attacks by anyone associated with them, as well as halting all attempts to extract so-called taxes at checkpoints along the roads.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is also looking at how it can help. Meanwhile, I appeal to the donor community to redouble its efforts to ensure that key under-funded sectors such as health, nutrition and water and sanitation receive the rapid support they need.

I am pleased to say that the moratorium on restrictions and the joint communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian assistance in Darfur, which were extended at the end of January, have helped to alleviate bureaucratic obstacles. I am grateful to the Government of the Sudan for improved cooperation in that area, but the humanitarian operation still faces other obstacles. Those agreements do not, for example, ensure physical access to IDPs and other vulnerable groups. Humanitarian workers are too often blocked by military intelligence, national security elements or civilian police, seemingly at random. Those denials of access serve no discernible purpose aside from frustrating relief efforts and increasing suffering.

The Government of the Sudan can therefore do much more to help on the humanitarian side. In areas under its control, the Government should improve security for civilians and the international community, in accordance with international law, and ensure more freedom of movement for relief organizations. The Government should disband once and for all the Janjaweed militias and put an end to impunity for those who commit crimes — including banditry, the killings of civilians and rape — by actively seeking out those responsible and prosecuting them. As an increasingly prosperous country, the Sudan should provide more assistance to its population, rather than continuing to allow the international community to shoulder virtually all the financial responsibility.

Rebel movements are responsible for many of the threats facing civilians and the relief operation. They too can do much more. They should stop endangering the lives of civilians by the kind of attacks that are bound to provoke a response in civilian areas, with predominantly civilian casualties. All groups should stop attacking humanitarian vehicle convoys and premises, control all those within their ranks and punish those responsible. The movements should ensure safe humanitarian access and assistance and show respect for basic humanitarian principles. They should ensure the civilian character of IDP camps and villages.

In spite of those challenges, 14,700 international, national and local relief workers continue, wherever and whenever possible, to provide life-saving assistance. I spoke a year ago of the fragility of the operation. That has increased as time has gone by. But the agencies, organizations and individuals involved have refused to be intimidated. I salute their determination and that of donors.

However, even if the humanitarian presence at times can act as a deterrent to violence against civilians and our efforts sustain the lives of millions, humanitarians still cannot provide what is fundamentally lacking.

I am saddened and angry as Emergency Relief Coordinator that, after five years of that suffering and four years since the Council became actively engaged, we have still not been able to find a lasting solution to the suffering of those millions of men, women and children. A study in 2006 suggested that 200,000 had lost their lives from the combined effects of the conflict. That figure must be much higher now, perhaps half as much again, yet we continue to see the goalposts receding, to the point where peace in Darfur seems further away today than ever. Further progress in the deployment of UNAMID, equipped to protect civilians and improve security, will help, but only an end to all violence and concrete steps towards a political settlement will make the fundamental difference needed, as the rebel movements themselves above all need to recognize. Otherwise, the reality is that the people of Darfur face a continued steady deterioration of their conditions of life and their chances of lasting recovery.

I said at this time last year that I hoped from the bottom of my heart that I would not be back here one year later to repeat the same messages, but the reality is that I have come here today to give the Council even worse news. In the absence of any real progress towards a solution, whatever the efforts of the international community and the Council, profound human suffering will continue to grow in Darfur.

The President: I thank Mr. Holmes for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.